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Biography

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WILLIAM CECIL



WILLIAM CECIL, FIRST BARON BURGHLEY

WILLIAM CECIL

THE POWER BEHIND ELIZABETH

BY

ALAN GORDON SMITH

"Secretary Cecil may be called the King of England."

SIR THOMAS BULLELEY



LONDON

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PREFACE

It was an ironical fate to achieve while living a fame of the very first magnitude, only to have it consistently debased by posterity: to be acknowledged by contemporaries as the virtual "Ruler of England" throughout the period that was most decisive in the nation's development, then to be reduced in history to little more than a faithful flunkey: painstaking, astute, patriotic (if you will); but essentially a figure in the background; a minor character in the drama; a necessary but obscure adjunct.

This is no exaggeration of what has befallen the first and greatest Cecil. Partly, perhaps, it is because his virtues, even the most English of them, are not those which his countrymen like to consider nationally characteristic. But there are other reasons for what amounts to an almost deliberate conspiracy to dwarf him: reasons which he himself—since he was always ready to efface himself for the cause he had at heart—would probably have been the first to justify. But by this time such reasons have lost what validity they may have had, whereas the continued falsification of his true importance, falsifies also the history of his age.

Not that champions have been wholly lacking. As early as 1828, the Rev. Edward Nares, D.D., was gallantly inspired to write and publish three monumental volumes in folio: *Memoirs* (he called them) *of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Secretary of State in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth, and Lord*

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High Treasurer of England in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth . . . and so on, for at least six more lines of stately and magnificent title. The work itself was in scale proportionate; but, alas, it missed its purpose and is now only memorable for the facetious amazement of the great Macaulay at its stupendous weight and sheer cubic dimensions: it "filled" the omniscient "us with astonishment!" Later, something of the truth, which the unfortunate Dr. Nares had striven so heroically to express, was partially and uncertainly perceived by Froude; but Froude, in representing Burghley as the hero of his imaginative *History of England*, projected an incongruous figure of Victorian respectability into an age that was singularly deficient in that quality. Still more recently, Martin Hume, in his *Great Lord Burghley*, used the copious material at present available to produce a learned study of Elizabethan diplomacy; but he made little attempt to unify and correlate the many-sided achievement of his remarkable subject, who remains, in consequence, still the patient "adviser," the unobtrusively assiduous flunkey.

Actually no subordinate, but a great and successful revolutionary leader, Lord Burghley, like so many other successful leaders, secured the ultimate triumph of his Cause—that momentous revolution of the sixteenth century—because, as a man, he was greater than the cause he led: because he understood so thoroughly both the cause and its adherents as to be able, in a sense, to *see through* both. It is the intention, therefore, of this present study to reveal the man himself, as clearly as it is possible at this distance of four centuries, in true relation to his amazing age: to the strange woman, his Queen, whom he at once served and controlled, and to the whole shame and glory of her reign: to the enterprise of her famous seamen, as well as to the sordid atrocities of Tyburn; to the long tragedy that culminated

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at Fotheringay, and to the tragedy's epilogue, the wistful retrospectiveness of that younger generation, the generation of Essex and Shakespeare. For whether in its operation attractive or repellent, the one unifying principle of the Elizabethan age was the mind of that vigilant little figure, writing thoughtfully at his desk; watching, scheming, anticipating everything, and patiently completing his clearly envisaged design.

A. G. S.

July, 1934.

**“ Those who rise from private citizens to be princes
merely by fortune have little trouble in rising but very
much in maintaining their position.”**

MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince* : Chapter VII.

I

FOUNDATIONS

SOME centuries ago a certain German friar, being obsessed by the probability of his own impending damnation, had recourse to a spiritual nostrum of his own discovering, which he thereupon incontinently offered to the world. The explosive "Reformation" which followed, a revolution both social and economic as well as moral and religious, was as far-reaching in its repercussions as the more recent revolutions in France and Russia. Its programme comprised a similar blending of the material with the spiritual: the preaching of a "Gospel" combined with a general confiscation of property. Nor was it established without a long and relentless conflict. That in many parts of Europe it was at length established, and the whole character of Christendom thereby changed, was very largely due to the triumph of the revolutionary cause in England. And its triumph in England was principally the work of a single statesman—a supreme master of what we should now call "revolutionary technique." This singular genius, after imposing the great change on a reluctant people, effected in the course of a generation an all but national conversion: a conversion to that enduring new religion—a mixture of Nationalism and Individualism—which has brought into being our modern England, and indirectly much, in the world as a whole, which we at present cherish or deplore.

His birth in 1520, at Bourne in Lincolnshire, was almost coincident with the origin of the great upheaval. Friar Martin's panacea was already advertised, but there were few as yet who appreciated the significance of its virtues. Princes, as though nothing had happened, still blindly pursued their

dynastic trivialities; and during the summer of this momentous year their Majesties of England and France had nothing better to do than fool it diplomatically at the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

It so happened that on this magnificently futile occasion there was in attendance on King Henry VIII of England a young squire named Richard Cecil, a humble page of the household, whose solitary claim to distinction is that on the 13th of the following September he became the father of his illustrious son.

The infant, christened William, was destined (incidentally) to create for his family not only a future but a past. For one of the very few hobbies of William Cecil's maturity was to be a passionate interest in genealogies; and feeling presently that his own lacked something in distinction, he was tempted to engraft it, from his grandfather, David Cecil, upon the enviable antiquity of the Herefordshire Sitsilts. It is true the names have a certain assonance, but all that is definitely known of this grandfather, David, the supposed cadet of the Sitsilts, is that about the beginning of the century he was a prosperous tradesman of Stamford. According to an unkindly rumour, current many years later, his actual business had been inn-keeping. But, whatever it was, he grew rich enough to purchase an estate in the county and become the friend of his neighbour, Lord Willoughby de Eresby of Grimsthorpe. Presumably it was Lord Willoughby's influence at court that obtained for grandfather Cecil the numerous grants and offices—shrievalties, stewardships of Crown lands and so forth—that gladdened his declining years. The reversion of much of this, together with the romantic-sounding offices of Water-bailiff of Wittlesea Mere and Keeper of the Swans throughout the Fen country, passed in due course to his son Richard Cecil, the page of the royal household. He, in his turn, consolidated his worldly position by marrying the heiress of William Heckington of Bourne, through whom he was ultimately to obtain, with other agreeable properties, that of Burghley

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in Northamptonshire, a name that was soon to become famous.

Meanwhile the little grandson of the Stamford tradesman (or innkeeper) was put to school at Grantham and afterwards at Stamford itself. He was an earnest, delicate child, playing no games, but precociously observant of his elders. And already in the great world significant happenings were observable. It was no secret that the charms of a certain designing young person at court were raising scruples in the King's mind as to whether his marriage, celebrated eighteen years before, were truly and canonically valid. But the matter had to go to Rome, and so far it had been impossible to persuade the Pope to view the case sympathetically. It was the delay thus occasioned that led to the downfall and disgrace of the Cardinal Archbishop of York. Young William Cecil was nine years old at the time: he was still at school when King Henry clinched his "affair" by repudiating the authority to which he had appealed. By this act the nation became severed from the body of western Christendom, and though at Stamford it seemed to make little immediate difference, two years later, when young Cecil passed to the university, he quickly learnt its implications.

The scholarly assiduity he displayed at Cambridge developed later into something of a legend: indeed his earliest biographer, an anonymous underling of his household, surmises that it was his zeal for study that permanently undermined his health:

"He hired the bellringer to call him up at four of the clock every morning: with which watching and continual sitting, there fell abundance of humours into his legs, then very hardly cured, which was thought one of the original causes of his Gout."

The academical distinctions attributed to him by the same author—such as his reading of the Greek lecture, "as a Gentleman" (be it understood) "for his exercise upon pleasure without pension, before he was nineteen years old"

—are generally assumed to be mythical. Still he acquired at Cambridge a sufficiency of learning, the instincts of gentlemanly scholarship and (what was far more) the entrée into that little group of intellectuals which, when the revolution obtained a hold in England, was to supply its literary propaganda.

Already, for the past decade at least, the works of Luther had been secretly studied at Cambridge and had made converts among the younger dons. It was from Cambridge that the secretly Lutheran Cranmer had come to court to be an indulgent keeper of the royal, but wayward conscience. As Primate he was careful to conceal his opinions, but he had left many of his own way of thinking at the university, and especially at Cecil's college, John's. Among the fellows of the college when Cecil was in residence were Roger Ascham, the educational theorist; William Bill, the future Protestant divine, who was to be of service to Cecil later; Haddon the civilian, in his own day (but not in ours) much admired for his flowery Latinity; and most notably of all, the classical scholar, John Cheke. Young Cecil attended his lectures and became an intimate friend, not only of Cheke, but of Cheke's crony and colleague, also of John's, the podgy-faced Thomas Smith. He too was to be important in the future.

Such were the men who had the moulding of young Cecil's mind at its most formative period. Fresh from his Lincolnshire home, where the subversive ideas of Luther were as yet barely whispered, he found himself in a society where the brilliance of a younger generation was boasting an enthusiastic sympathy with the revolution that was sweeping Germany. The movement was in its essence centrifugal, a rebellion against that unity of European culture that has its spiritual centre in Rome. To minds just awakening to that Renaissance vision of a forgotten antiquity, of rationalistic philosophies and freer and more simple modes of living, Luther's appeal from the corporate tradition of the Church to the isolated individual soul came as an inspiration that

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was almost intoxicating. Pushed to extremes, no doubt, this private interpretation of the written Word might lead to dangerous eccentricities. In Germany it had produced the Anabaptists, with their communisms and obscene polygamies. But the adventurousness of youth was not deterred. At Cambridge Cecil found intelligent young men elated at the new doctrines, just as many are to-day at the theories being tested in Russia.

Would they ever be adopted in England? Admittedly the ideas of Luther were as repugnant to the new Head of the Church as ever they could have been to the old. But in the very assumption of that title the King had acted equivocally. In at least one respect he had violently broken with the past: he had cut off the nation from the well-spring of tradition, the living principle of all that was old and conservative. Moreover, he was at that very moment consolidating the good work by destroying the monasteries: those huge vested interests that stood in the way of change.

In every Catholic country there would seem to be a force of anti-clericalism, latent or obtrusive according to the excellence or corruption of the clerical estate; not necessarily heretical, but jealous of the Church's influence and privilege, and covetous (usually) of its wealth. The clergy in England were less corrupt than in Germany; but they were moderately so; and the anti-clericals were proportionately truculent. They had enthusiastically supported the King's breach with Rome, and they were now to receive their reward. It was during Cecil's first year at Cambridge that the lesser monasteries were put down. To his new friends at John's it was clearly a step in the right direction, and a youth who prided himself on his advanced opinions could feel no sympathy with the peasants of his own Lincolnshire when they sacrificed their lives for a losing cause. Within two or three years, all the other religious houses had disappeared. "To them that have it shall be given": fulfilling literally the words of the Gospel, the enlightened sovereign proceeded to distribute the enormous wealth of the abbeys, public property held in

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trust for the nation, among a swarm of courtiers and influential squires, families which would staunchly support the ecclesiastical revolution and form a barrier of gold against any future turning of the tide. It was a stroke of policy which, executed when it was, left a lasting impression on the young man's mind. In after years he recognized it as the real foundation of the great "Reform," and never tired of praising it as an example to less fortunate nations.

He had private reasons also for rejoicing at the great confiscation, for his own father's estates were thereby largely augmented. Appropriately enough, the property of Burghley itself had once belonged to religious.

After five years at John's, Cecil went down from the university without taking a degree. The reason assigned is romantic. From attending Cheke's lectures in Greek, he had come to take an interest also in his learned friend's sister, Mary Cheke. Though of a family not contemptible, the Chekes' father had been only a beadle at Cambridge and their mother kept a wine shop. Cecil *père*, the pushful courtier and now wealthy squire, was not unnaturally perturbed. Abruptly removing his son from Cambridge, he entered him as a student at Gray's Inn.

But in London the young Cecil showed himself less devoted to the law than he had been at Cambridge to the classics. "As his years and company required," we are told, "he would many times be merry among young Gentlemen, who were most desirous of his company for his witty mirth and merry temper." Once, indeed, his merry temper so misled him that "having never used play before," he proceeded to gamble away to one of his companions not only his money and books, but his clothes and bedding as well. However, this, one of his few indiscretions, was very soon remedied, and by a method eminently characteristic. He resolved (according to the story) "he would presently have a device to be even with him, and with a long trunk made a hole in the wall near his playfellow's bedstead." Through this at midnight he began to bellow ghostly admonitions:

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"Oh mortal man repent! Repent of thy horrible sin, play, cosenage and such lewdness, or else thou art damned and canst not be saved "

This, the first recorded instance of a genuine Cecilian "device," in its own small way was as successful as any of the more famous. For in the morning the conscience-stricken sharper, having been "driven into a sweat for fear," humbly begged pardon on his knees, vowed fervently he would never play again and (what was really to the purpose) restored the whole of his winnings.

But contrary to his father's hopes, these distractions at Gray's Inn failed to cure the young man of his weakness for Mary Cheke. On August 8, 1541—the year of his coming to London—he married her. As he was not quite of age, it is presumed his father consented. He had good reason to do so, for young William knew what he was about. John Cheke was already Regius Professor at Cambridge: the very next year he became tutor to Jane Seymour's son, the little prince Edward. As tutor of the heir to the throne he possessed a secret and increasingly important influence, and it is therefore not surprising to hear next of his young brother-in-law at court—upholding, in argument with two Irish ecclesiastics, the doctrine of the Royal Supremacy. An able youth of such sound opinions deserved encouragement: so it was that, when the incident had been reported to the King, Richard Cecil (now Groom of the Robes) was bidden to find out some suitable office for his son. There happened to be few available just then, but presently a reversion was obtained of the post of *Custos Brevium* in the Court of Common Pleas. It was something at least in anticipation.

Mary Cecil, besides laying the foundation of her husband's career, also bore him (in May, 1542) a son. With that, her mission in life being accomplished, in the following February she died. The young widower, content with the foundations, was now free to proceed with the superstructure. Once a line has been struck that appears to offer promise of success,

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it is a sound maxim with the ambitious to persevere in that line consistently. William Cecil was naturally persevering. He had chosen to specialize in the academic approach to distinction. His marriage to Mary Cheke had made him known at court as a young man of shrewdness and ability, as well as the heir to a fortune of considerable proportions. *The Cheke connection had also brought him into that little scholarly group at court at the head of which stood that prince of pedagogues, Sir Antony Coke, the little Edward's Governor.* Coke's reputation had been made by the success with which he had educated his own daughters—all four of them noted blue-stockings. Mildred, the eldest, was now a girl of twenty—marriageable. And Cecil, continuing to specialize academically, married her. Physically unattractive, his new bride was imposingly learned, pious, austere, and from a stern sense of duty, charitable. Moreover, she was the daughter of Sir Antony Coke.

Allied now to the Cokes as well as to the Chekes, Cecil acquired a definite place among the secret revolutionaries about the King, at the head of whom (above even Cranmer, the Primate) stood the energetic and ambitious Earl of Hertford, a Seymour, and uncle of the little Prince of Wales. Anyone could see that Seymour was the coming man. When the old King died, it was Seymour who would come to the front, bringing with him all the new men, the enriched anti-clericals, the zealots and the young intellectuals. And among these would certainly be Cecil.

It could not be long now, and the Seymour group had prepared everything. Their only rivals had been the conservative Howards—also enriched by the plunder of the Church, but not, like the Seymours, made by it. However, Seymour and his friends had the old King well in hand. At the eleventh hour they had secured the attainder of old Norfolk and his son: the latter had been actually executed on a framed-up charge of treason, and his slippery old father was lying under sentence of death. Meanwhile the Seymour faction, having divided among its members the hundreds of

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thousands that had been mulcted from the Howards, had prevailed on the dying sovereign to secure it a dominating influence in his child-heir's Council of Regency. Certainly those who were for the revolution had every reason to feel satisfied. It only remained for the King to die: then the important business would begin—the final and unequivocal triumph of the Gospel, the victory of the new order and the exhilarating scramble for all that was left of the loot.

So matters stood at the opening of the new year—1547. Through January they continued in eager anticipation, while the bloated, syphilitic carcass, all that remained of visible Majesty, grew daily more torpid and decayed. On the 28th, during the darkness of the early morning, the final spark of life deserted it.

II

APPRENTICESHIP

§ 1.

"BE sure," runs one of the great statesman's *Precepts*, written many years later for the guidance of his favourite son—"be sure you keep some great man alwayes to your Friend."

Profound wisdom and pithily expressed! Most of us, if we had been fortunate enough to hit upon so vivid an aphorism, would have jotted it down thankfully and so left it. But such was not the way of William Cecil. Thorough in everything he undertook, he must needs elaborate and explain:

"Yet trouble him not," he proceeds, "for trifles: Compliment him often: present him with manie, yet small gifts, and of little charge." (Note the artistic restraint, the deliberate economy of means.) "And if you have cause to bestow any great gratuitie on him, then let it be no Chest commodity, or obscure thing: but such a one as may be daily in sight, the better to be remembered: for otherwise you will live like a Hop without a Pole, or a Vine without her Elme, subject to injurie and oppression, ready to be made a Football for every superior insulting companion to spurne at."

Surely the very poetry of prudent worldly wisdom!

The noble author was writing from the fulness of experience. At the outset of his career he had made no mistake about his own Great Man for Friend. Having carefully looked about him, he had chosen unerringly the elder Seymour, the Earl of Hertford; and when, on the King's death, that Great Man assumed the Dukedom of Somerset and became Lord Protector of the realm, young William Cecil was of his household.

The character of Protector Somerset has been to many an enigma. They have been at a loss to reconcile his enormous personal greed with an apparent sympathy with the grievances of the poor: his strenuous leadership of the revolutionary cause with his public denunciation of many of its inseparable evils. The factor that has been overlooked and explains these apparent inconsistencies is a very simple and ingenuous impudence. With all his grovelling prostrations before the Sacred Person of his little nephew, he conceived that through his protectorship the actuality of royal power was centred in himself. For all practical purposes *he* was king: hence his own aims and policy became identified in his mind with the aims and policy of the Crown. As the late Henry (of glorious memory) had confiscated the lands of the abbey, so he might lay hands on the chantries: as Henry had published articles of religion for the Church, so he might define its doctrines further, or even revise its liturgy. At the same time he had not forgotten (as has been forgotten since) that one of the functions of a national monarchy is to protect the interests of even its humblest subjects and curb the lawless oppression of the rich. Therefore, himself representing such a national monarchy, he considered himself officially bound to oppose the tyranny that others of his class were exercising over the countryside, to discountenance enclosures and rack-renting, the eviction of tenants and the transforming of a free peasantry into a menacing army of unemployed. It was thus that he won from the people his not conspicuously appropriate title of "The Good Duke," and from the rich and his colleagues in the Council the resentment that hounded him from office.

It is in keeping with this remarkable man's pretensions to the offices of royalty that he should have established his household on the model of that of the King. Offices, indeed, became doubled. Besides the official Master of Requests, for instance, or the regular Secretary of State, the Protector employed for ordinary public business, as well as confidential affairs of his own, his personal secretary, his private master

of requests. It was for this latter office that he had found a suitable candidate in the young son-in-law and protégé of Sir Antony Coke. As Master of Requests in the Great Man's household Cecil was eminently discreet and efficient: so generally useful, indeed, that he accompanied the Great Man on his Scottish campaign in the summer. At Pinkie, where the Scots were defeated by Somerset and his Italian musketeers, the Cecilian legend of half a century later relates that he narrowly escaped death from a cannon ball. We have no contemporary corroboration; but his experience seems to have prejudiced him for ever against soldiering. In later years he gave it as his considered opinion that "he that sets up to live by that profession can hardly be an honest man or a good Christian. . . . Besides," as he shrewdly adds, "it is a service no longer in request than use: for soldiers in Peace are like chimneys in summer, like dogs past hunting, or women when their beauty is done."

Leaving Scotland to be converted by garrisons and bibles, the Great Man returned with his Master of Requests to London, where Parliament was due to meet in November. The main business of its first session was to ear-mark a proper reward to the wealthy anti-clericals who were now in a position to secure the triumph of the Gospel. For this purpose there still remained extensive public funds that might be confiscated on religious pretexts. In the name of the little puppet-King, the Chantries Act annexed with one swoop all endowments connected with celebrating Masses for the Dead, and all the funds of colleges, guilds and other corporate bodies that might be described as fostering "superstition." Besides providing for another lucrative share-round for the leading revolutionaries, the act secured two secondary objects: it made a direct attack on one of the beliefs and practices most characteristic of the Old Religion, and it also weakened and soon destroyed those popular religious and semi-religious associations that bound the lives of the people most intimately to the Catholic faith. Just as the closing of the monasteries, with the consequent increase in enclosures for sheep-farming,

had gone far towards exterminating the free peasantry which had been the strength and backbone of the nation, so the attack on the guilds revolutionized the life of the labouring population of the towns. Whatever the condition of the guilds may have been at the time, the Chantry Act destroyed them; it ended the old system under which men had practised their crafts in freedom, and it cleared the ground for competition, wage-slavery, the thing we now call Capitalism. Socially there was nothing more important in the whole great revolution than the passing of this act; and Cecil, the Great Man's Master of Requests, beholding it, saw that it was good.

But this social and economic revolution was not independent of the general religious revolt which had made it possible, and which only by succeeding could render these changes permanent. So the anti-clerical rich, caring nothing for speculative theology, made common cause with the zealous reformists to put down for ever in England the influence of that international society, restrictive in discipline and conservative of ancient tradition—the Catholic and Roman Church. Now the central rite of that society, irrespective of national or provincial variations, is the mystic perpetuation of Calvary, the Sacrifice of the Mass. The reformers noted that everywhere it was the Mass that exerted some obstinate and mysterious spell: everywhere it endured, their efforts at reform were frustrated. Consequently it was the Mass, the potent idea of sacrifice, they made it their business to destroy. Once they could sufficiently undermine the doctrine of a real and corporal Presence in the Sacrament, the sacrificial idea would vanish; with the idea of Sacrifice, the unique character of the priesthood, and with the priesthood, the whole Catholic system that it was their final object to obliterate.

But the Mass, so vital, with such a hold on the national life, was something that could not be done away with outright; it could only be undermined, and that gradually. The first step, obviously, was to lay stress on the Communion

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of the faithful as the only essential element in the eucharistic ceremony: then to establish, if possible, a new form of Communion Service which should be presently revealed as something entirely different from the Mass. Hence the importance attached by the reformists to Communion in both kinds: it was everywhere their first demand, and it was the initial step now taken in this first Parliament of Edward VI towards the uprooting of the Mass itself.

But how to get it past the ecclesiastical opponents of reform? Many of these—such as Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester—who had made no difficulty about accepting the Royal Supremacy, would tolerate no meddling with the orthodox Catholic faith.

The difficulty was surmounted by a beautifully ingenious expedient. Why not pass a bill *Against speaking unreverently of the Sacrament*? There was plenty of blasphemous rowdiness among the more impetuous of the elect: a measure to check it would be very welcome to the ordinary citizen. The advanced people might suspect it as savouring of an admission of the Real Presence; but at least the conservatives could not object. And it would reassure them about voting for the really important (but inconspicuous) clause, authorizing the administration of the Communion in both kinds. After all there was nothing heretical about such a practice: it would be merely a breach of long-accepted discipline. And the bill had an ostensibly laudable object: the protection of the Blessed Sacrament.

The ruse worked perfectly. Commonly it has been attributed to the Protector himself; but one may be permitted to have doubts. There was little subtlety about Somerset, and this Bill was essentially a "device." Furthermore, it was a device to which, in similar circumstances later, Cecil himself had recourse on his own account. May we not conjecture that, in the first instance, the framing of it was a timely suggestion from that deep young man, the Protector's Master of Requests?

At any rate, when Parliament, early in the following year,

had been prorogued, young Cecil had given enough evidence of his discretion and ability to be advanced still further in the Duke's service. His private diary contains for the year 1548 the single entry: "*co-opatus sū in of^m Secretarii.*" Henceforward, as the Protector's personal secretary, he had charge of all his correspondence, became conversant with every detail of his affairs. No further need for compliments or gifts, whether of great or little charge. He knew his Great Man's secrets.

§ 2.

Parliament's initial endeavours were augmented—another important step towards the final objective—by a proclamation to establish a new form for administering the Communion as a separate service from the Mass. This also, later, was to be a useful precedent for Cecil. Moreover, further proclamations ordered the destruction of images in churches and abolished those ancient rites and ceremonies—palms, ashes, blessed candles and so forth—that were so familiarly associated with the old form of worship.

But these were merely the outworks. Before an offensive could be launched against the citadel itself, it would be necessary to break the resistance of the more conservative among the clergy, and especially that forceful personality, who was its leader—Stephen Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester. In the service of the late King that bold-eyed prelate, square-jawed and swarthy, had been loyal but never subservient. While accepting the Royal Supremacy, he had (so he claimed) on more than one occasion "squared with" his irascible master. He was a statesman, and therefore by temperament conciliatory; but he had now taken a stand against further innovations, and above all, against any tampering with the Mass. About that he was immovable. And the revolutionaries knew their man. Before even preparing their main attack it would be necessary to deal with Gardiner.

Summoned to London, the bishop was required to preach a sermon on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, expressing quite

definitely his approval of "the King's Majesty's proceedings in matters of religion." Thenceforward it was Cecil, as the Protector's secretary, who had the conduct of the whole affair. It was he who presented the government's instructions and demanded a written draft of the sermon in advance. (Cecil always liked having things in writing.) The bishop refused. He was warned that the King (aged 10!) would take special note of what he said; but his Lordship remained unmoved. Again came Mr. Cecil, only two days before the feast, and demanded "that he should forbear to speak of the Sacrament, neither of the Mass." At such a time, maintained the bishop, when the Blessed Sacrament was by many defamed, he dared not, as a prelate, refrain from speaking his mind. And speak his mind he did. In spite of a final and peremptory order from the Council, his sermon, reports the French ambassador, was "the direct contrary of all the new opinions now approved. As to the Mass and the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, he declared he would rather be burnt a hundred times than deviate from what the Church had determined, and he would think himself happy to die in such a quarrel." In view of his orders this amounted to contemptuous defiance, and on the following day the bishop was sent to the Tower.

It only remained to draw up on behalf of the Council an official report of the affair. And none could be more fitted to do this than he who had had the conduct of the proceedings, the Protector's private secretary. Cecil, therefore, it was who described at length how the bishop had *voluntarily offered* to declare to the world his conformity, saying he was in his conscience "well satisfied and liked well the King's Majesty's proceedings. . . . And yet, all this notwithstanding, at the day appointed he did most arrogantly and disobediently speak of certain matters contrary to an express commandment given unto him." It was the first of many official reports of similar veracity that Cecil, in his long career, was to write and offer to the public.

Gardiner being disposed of, the finishing touches were put to a new and uniform liturgy upon which Cranmer had been

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engaged for years. In this the old offices of the Church were anglicized and greatly simplified. The Eucharist—a "Holy Communion commonly called the Mass"—was really an extension of the new service, authorized already for the Communion in both kinds, and was intended now as a substitute for the Mass itself. Superficially, indeed, it resembled a translation of the Mass into English; but in the omission of all definite reference to a propitiatory sacrifice it approximated to the Lutheran form. Since it was mainly the secretly recited portions of the Canon that had been tampered with, to the ordinary worshippers the new service would seem merely the Mass in English. Hence its subtlety as a feeler. For it was never intended to be anything else. It satisfied none of the earnest reformists—not even Cranmer, who (with the acknowledged collaboration of the Holy Ghost) had most to do with its composition. That prelate, indeed, under the influence of the continental revolutionaries who were now flocking to seek refuge in England, had drifted fast from simple Lutheranism to the more logical extremities of the Swiss. But it was advisable to go cautiously. Even as it was, some antagonism was to be expected from the people. Hence the government was prepared: any popular resistance would be ill organized and wholly without military resources; whereas the Council would have cannon at their disposal, not to mention the German companies already in their pay. And so the new Prayer Book, episcopal opposition being adequately circumvented, was sanctioned by Parliament during its second session, in the winter of 1548-49. It was to be imposed on the nation in the following June.

But there was another task the Parliament had to perform during this winter: the condemnation for treason of no less a person than the Lord Protector's own brother. None was more typical of his class and generation than Thomas Seymour of Sudeley, the Lord Admiral. Rising, with the rest of his family, from obscurity to greatness, he had claimed a younger brother's pickings of all the Protector's hauls. As ambitious as Somerset, with all Somerset's insatiable greed,

he was of a simpler temperament than his brother, and his straightforward appetite for gain was wholly uncomplicated by any sense of official responsibility. His first move had been to aspire unsuccessfully to the hand of the princess Elizabeth, Anne Boleyn's daughter, then in her fifteenth year. Failing in this, he had nevertheless obtained the guardianship of her, after marrying Catherine Parr, the last of Henry's queens. Before this lady died, which she did very soon in child-birth, he was again making coarse advances to the young Lady Elizabeth (who certainly liked them). At the same time, with his wife's brother, Northampton, he entered into an actual conspiracy against the Protector. He had just negotiated—with a view to financing his undertaking—a shady transaction with the master of the mint at Bristol, when one of his accomplices betrayed him and he found himself laid by the heels. There was neither doubt of his guilt nor dearth of evidence to prove it, but the Protector considered it simplest to proceed against his brother by attainder. Parliament readily passed the necessary act to condemn him, and in March he was executed.

All the evidence in the case necessarily came before Cecil. The depositions of witnesses, the examinations of all the persons concerned, the descriptions of Seymour's visits to the Lady Elizabeth's bedroom, of the playful and indelicate smackings of her—no detail of the business escaped the Protector's secretary. And it was Cecil who kept the documents; they are still in the collection at Hatfield.

Altogether the affair did Somerset no good—as his secretary was in a position to observe. The Protector's lordliness, his regal "We," above all his righteous pose of defending the commons against those of his own class, were making him enemies everywhere, and especially among his colleagues of the Council. It now only needed a favourable opportunity for them to be able to bring him down as he himself had brought down his brother. The opportunity was provided that very year by the widespread rising of the commons.

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Something of the kind had been anticipated, but hardly on so large a scale. When the new Prayer Book was introduced at Whitsuntide, even in London, where the revolutionaries were most strong, there was a marked reluctance to accept it. In the provinces there was open revolt. From Cornwall it spread eastward; in the midlands it was enflamed by the peasants' resentment at enclosures; and so through Oxfordshire it passed to the home counties, to East Anglia and as far as Yorkshire. But the rest of the Catholic north was quiet: its spirit had been ruthlessly broken, only thirteen years before, when it had revolted to save the monasteries. In the South the government had the situation well in hand. Germans and Italians were in arms to stamp out the native rebellion: the Cornishmen were hacked to pieces, priests were strung up to their own church steeples, and everywhere order was restored—except in Norfolk. The character of the rising in Norfolk was different: no gentlemen were concerned in it and no religious issues were involved. Ket, the prosperous Norwich tradesman who was at its head, complained solely of economic grievances, and particularly of the engrossing of the commons. He adopted the plausible attitude of enforcing the existing laws against enclosures which the government was content should be ignored. Somerset's theories being what they were, such reasoning tied his hands. And his enemies in the Council knew it. The rebels made short work of Northampton (the late Admiral's brother-in-law) whom the Protector had sent against them; and it remained for Warwick, the Protector's most hostile critic, to end the affair with the mercenaries.

John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, was another fine product of the revolution. His father had got himself well detested in the service of Henry VII, and for his pains had been executed by that monarch's successor. But afterwards the family was adequately compensated by its share of the spoils of the monasteries. This John, the son, had been raised to the peerage by the late King, and to his present title when he and his crew came into their own on Henry's death. A

capable soldier, like all his set ambitions of gain, but with more than his share of cunning, he had been patiently waiting for a chance to oust the Protector. And certainly Somerset had been playing into his hands. While hopelessly alienating the conservatives, he was considered by the progressives as no more zealous than he should be. He had made a mess of things in Scotland by allowing the little Queen to be carried off to the court of France. At home he had been monopolizing far more than his share of the swag, while his views on the rights of the commons seemed illogical and almost indecent. Finally, his supposed sympathy with the rising in Norfolk gave Warwick the opportunity he had been seeking.

The Protector's private secretary was beginning to feel a little uneasy. It was to him that Warwick sent his requests for payments overdue to the troops—payments everyone knew the Protector was unable to make. In September Somerset conveyed the King to Hampton Court. Among others that accompanied him were Paget, a dishonest rogue, but in his environment morally inconspicuous; Archbishop Cranmer, in a condition of acute anxiety; and the two Secretaries of State, Petre (a dark horse) and Cecil's old friend Smith. (Since leaving Cambridge, Smith had taken orders, but reconsidering his vocation, had begotten an illegitimate son.) And naturally the Protector also had with him his own personal secretary, Cecil. From Hampton Court, while Warwick and his friends were completing their arrangements at Ely Place, his house in Holborn, Somerset launched an appeal to the nation to rally to the King against the rival gang in London. To Cecil this seemed highly injudicious, and he was careful henceforth to avoid committing himself in writing to any of the Protector's actions. It was on October 1 that Somerset made his proclamation to the people. A week later he dispatched Paget to Ely Place to find out how matters stood. Paget never returned. The Protector's household (with the little royal Person) moved hastily to Windsor; but Warwick had the Tower and (what in civil disturbance

has always been the key to success) the City. Somerset sent off to him another of his underlings, Hoby; who, having ratted like Paget, returned to Windsor to tamper secretly with those in the Protector's following. He let it be understood that it would be well for them if they deserted while yet there was time. The hint was enough for Cranmer: he ran like a hare. So also did Petre. Smith, who was just a little simple, remained: and with him Cecil. But Cecil's case was different. It was Smith who had written all the Protector's official letters—Cecil had seen to that; his own connection with Somerset had been strictly and ostentatiously private.

Hoby, having performed his initial task with some success, now persuaded the Protector that no harm was intended to his person, and that if he would submit himself to Warwick and the Council the incident might be regarded as closed. The wretched Somerset, having now no alternative, rode up to London and was instantly committed to the Tower. With him went Secretary Smith.

Even Cecil was not entirely immune. An entry in his journal runs: "*Mense Novēb. a° 3° E.VI fui in Turre.*" But he was very soon released, and he was far too useful to remain long out of employment. If his "Great Man" had failed him, he had other important influence at his back: most notably that of Cheke, still tutor to his Majesty, and now "always at his elbow, both in his closet and in his chapel, and wherever he went, to inform him and teach him." Moreover, Warwick too would soon need an efficient and discreet subordinate. Cecil could afford to wait in the meantime. His reversion to the office of *Custus Brevium* had fallen in, and his services to Somerset had been rewarded with the manor and rectory of Wimbledon. Thither he retired on his release, to watch and await developments.

Warwick's *coup d'état* had been supported by everyone, conservative and reformist alike, who had any cause of complaint against the Protector. Consequently it was a matter of some interest which policy he would now adopt. In con-

science he was unattached to either party, and lest the sickly little King should die before coming of age his game might have been to turn reactionary in the hope of keeping in with the heir apparent, the strongly Catholic daughter of old Henry and Catharine of Aragon. But he was not the man to play for safety. It was the revolution that had placed him where he was. If Mary came in he would probably be overshadowed by the ecclesiastics: perhaps totally eclipsed by a royal consort. Better to gamble on Edward's survival, and in the meantime get all that could be had.

Although, unlike Somerset, he was content with a merely unofficial direction of the Council, he remained from now onwards the actual ruler of England. And the logic of his position was defined by the Parliament (of 1549-50) which ratified the end of the Protectorate. Dropping any pretence of disapproving of the rich man's tyranny, it gave statutory permission and even encouragement to rack-renting, enclosures and wholesale profiteering in corn. The religious policy of the Earl was equally whole-hearted, and the delighted reformers, relieved of their temporary anxiety, hailed him as their "faithful and intrepid soldier of Christ."

Such, indeed, was his intrepidity as a soldier of Christ, that he was ready to sacrifice to that service all considerations of mere national honour. To buy the support of France he gladly surrendered Boulogne and abandoned entirely the Protector's dream of a political union with Scotland. He suffered the little Queen of Scots to be betrothed to the Dauphin and was prepared, if necessary, to complete his subjection to French interests by marrying off Edward to the French King's daughter. Protestantism and patriotism had so far little in common.

Meanwhile, what Warwick sorely lacked was a reliable Secretary of State. Smith was disqualified through his loyalty to the late Protector; Wotton, who had succeeded him, seemed lukewarm in the cause of religion; and this objection applied to his colleague Petre as well. The obvious man for the post, one who possessed the requisite zeal for the cause,

combined with exceptional ability and shrewdness, was Somerset's former secretary, young William Cecil. The Earl approached him in the matter and in the following September (1550) Cecil was sworn and admitted to the office—"loco D. Wotton," as the *Journal* explains.

From this moment onwards every detail of the administration, both at home and abroad, is referred to Mr. Secretary Cecil. The Great Man (it is Warwick now) quickly learns to defer to him in everything, and Mr. Secretary is at pains to deserve it. Hour after hour he sits at his desk in his house in Cannon Row, planning, weighing, calculating—and always writing: letters to foreign correspondents, replies to suitors, long intricate memoranda of "business to be performed" or of policy to be adopted, schemes for meeting expenditure by the debasing of the national coinage, policy to be adopted towards the Emperor and the King of France. All this he combines with purely personal business—the careful management of his growing estates, calculating expenses and comparing them from year to year; yet these private things, again, he never allows to interfere with his zealous work for the Gospel, the reception, entertainment and rewarding of scores of foreign reformers—Germans, Frenchmen, Poles, Italians—all welcomed in England to direct the progress of the Cause. He passes from one exacting task to another, and every detail is perfected, calmly, without haste or flurry. It was said of him that he could call to mind anything he had done, seen or read. Certainly a remarkable young man, this Secretary Cecil: perhaps a little dangerous. Behind his thin brown beard there was something enigmatic about the expression of the mouth, and the restless eyes were vaguely disquieting.

§ 3.

After being deposed from his Protectorship, Somerset had been made to grovel before his late colleagues and disgorge a goodly lump of his plunder. But he was now again at large and plotting (as Cecil could disclose to his master) an alliance

with Gardiner and the Catholics for the overthrow of the new régime. Clearly, while Somerset lived, the Dudley predominance would remain precarious; hence Warwick determined to anticipate him. The plan was to have the ex-Protector charged with treason before his peers, and afterwards (like his brother, the Admiral) attainted and put to death. Cecil was the man to carry it out. With his usual precision he began to assemble the depositions of witnesses—there were sufficient forthcoming—and draw up lists of questions, subtly worded, all tending to incriminate the accused. Somerset, having a hint of what was in the air, tried to get at the truth from his late secretary. But Cecil was not to be drawn. "If he were not guilty," he observed coldly, "he might be of good courage; if he were, he had nothing to say but lament him." From these words Somerset might well have anticipated his fate. He was imprisoned two days later (October 16, 1551); the commission of peers performed what was required of them, and "The Good Duke" was executed in the following January.

Cecil was warmly congratulated by his friends on the astuteness with which he had severed himself from his old patron: for (as one of them superfluously reminded him) "it were a way to make an end of amity, if when men fall their friends should forthwith therefore be troubled."

Mr. Secretary was not troubled. On the contrary: he obtained a share of the honours—a knighthood. Warwick signalized his own triumph by conferring on himself the Dukedom of Northumberland; for a special reason (to be discovered later) another dukedom, that of Suffolk, was given to the Marquis of Dorset (Grey). It was the veritable apotheosis of all the new-rich who had consistently swum with the tide. Titles were showered on them. It was then that the Herberts came by their Earldom of Pembroke, that the founder of the Russells became Earl of Bedford, that Paulet (arch-time-server of them all) was raised to be Marquis of Winchester. Simultaneously came the final share-out. The vast bulk of the available spoils had been taken; but the

endowments of the bishoprics remained, and these the docile prelates of the new order obediently surrendered to their masters—Winchester and Durham alone were no mean hauls, and Latimer made no difficulty about relinquishing the revenues of London. Besides all this there were the forfeited estates of Arundel, implicated in Somerset's fall; not to mention those of Somerset himself. Naturally it was Northumberland and the new peers, Pembroke and the rest, who received the lion's share; but Cecil in his humble way had some. To the manor of Wimbledon, granted him by Somerset, were now added those of Bershamstow and Deping, Thetford with the reversion to Wraydike, Liddington in Rutlandshire, and Godstow. On the top of his income from these he had also his salary as Secretary, and all he could make from the Recordership of Boston and his office of *Custos Brevium*. It was little in comparison with some of the fortunes that were going, but on the other hand it was not insignificant. In his latter years he was once heard to remark regretfully that in twenty-six years of service under Elizabeth he had not been benefited so much as "within four years of King Edward." We may well believe it.

Northumberland's triumph also coincided with that of the Cause. By royal proclamation the Churches were cleansed of whatever remained of the old religion: statues were broken; the sacred vessels looted and melted down; the altars, symbolical of the hated Sacrifice, everywhere demolished and removed. Moreover, the time had come for a drastic change in the liturgy. There was to be no more compromising with the Whore of Babylon. Under the influence and guidance of the alien reformers, a commission was appointed to draw up a form of service from which every salient feature of the Mass was to be removed—"priests" were made "ministers," the "altar" (what it had literally become) a "table." The formularies of the new faith were succinctly defined in forty-two "articles," and therein the doctrine of the Real Presence, the logical foundation of the Mass, was formally abandoned and condemned.

THE MAKING OF GREATNESS

Cranmer, who presided over the commission, would seem on this occasion to have refrained from collaborating with the Paraclete. Instead he had the advice and friendly criticism of Cecil. Though not professedly a theologian, Cecil made himself personally responsible from the outset for the doctrines and discipline of the new official religion. Not only was he an important member of the commission, but when the work of that body was complete, he and his brother-in-law Cheke had to give their final approval before submitting it to Parliament and Convocation. From Parliament this good Protestant liturgy received its proper legal ratification, and the nation, by a proclamation of its Supreme (but consumptive and already dying) little Governor, was told what it would next have to believe.

§ 4.

But it was one thing to enjoin obedience, quite another to enforce it. And what was to happen in the near future? The boy who was nominally King had always been delicate in health; this, his sixteenth year, was patently to be his last. By old Henry's will (ratified by statute) his daughter Mary, Catharine of Aragon's child, should succeed. The Lady Mary, alas, had always set her face against her brother's "proceedings in matters of religion": though prostrating herself before little Royalty with the extravagant abasement of convention, she had obstinately, and in spite of the special remonstrances of Cecil, retained in her private chapel the Mass. There was no doubt whatever that as Queen she would reverse all the progress achieved; and also that in doing so she would have the enthusiastic support—it was idle to pretend otherwise—of an almost united nation. Worse still, the accession of Mary would mean the political extinction of Northumberland. That nobleman, when he overthrew Somerset, had had his choice of policy: he had decided to risk all and put his money boldly on the revolution. And now, as it seemed, he had lost.

But had he? Supposing it were feasible to set aside Mary on the ground of her statutory bastardy. That, it was true, would also disqualify the Protestant Elizabeth also; but after her the next in succession was the wife of Grey (it was not for nothing he had made Grey Duke of Suffolk)—she being the daughter of the late Henry's sister. Now the Suffolks had a daughter, a mere child of fourteen, but truly zealous for the Cause. If the Duchess of Suffolk would resign her claim to her daughter, Lady Jane, and if Lady Jane were to marry Northumberland's own son. . . . What did the prudent Mr. Secretary think of that?

Mr. Secretary thought a great deal. The project had obvious advantages. The Gospel would be saved, progress might continue and the nation in time become converted. Also the Dudley ascendancy would be preserved and the wealth that had been the Church's would remain with its present possessors. But then—it was highly dangerous. Would the people tolerate it? What if they were to rise and insist on enthroning Mary?

Mr. Cecil received a grant of Combe Park in Surrey and the Chancellorship of the Order of the Garter.

And what did he think about it now?

The King of France, he admitted, would naturally be favourable. The Duke had always been his friend, and he wouldn't like Mary, the kinswoman of the Emperor, as Queen. Yes, on the whole it was worth attempting—if (as Mr. Cecil privately resolved) the Secretary could avoid all the risks.

And so on Whitsunday (1553) Lady Jane became the wife of Lord Guildford Dudley at Northumberland's new house in the Strand. Mr. Secretary decided he was not feeling well and lay very low at Wimbledon. Temporarily his place as Secretary was occupied by his brother-in-law Cheke. Ought he, perhaps, to give Cheke a word of warning? On the whole he thought not. One couldn't be too careful, and there were times (*many* times) when a man's first duty was to himself.

The scheme proceeded. The earnest little King, as his death approached, gladly sacrificed his sisters for the truth

of the Gospel and approved with eagerness the Dudley succession. It therefore only remained for the lawyers to pronounce in its favour.

But what of wily Mr. Secretary and the mysterious illness that was keeping him so long at Wimbledon? The Duke had a suspicion he was shamming. He would have no one skulking in the background: everyone was to be in it, and their signatures damningly on paper. Consequently Mr. Cecil was summoned to London in a tone that made excuses impossible: and there, with his colleagues Cheke and Petre, he had to sign the summons to the judges.

Old Henry had set a precedent for devising the Crown by will; but Henry's will had received the assent and ratification of Parliament. It was a different thing altogether for another sovereign, and a minor at that, to set aside the will of a predecessor, and cancel an existing statute. The judges held it quite unconstitutional. But as Northumberland raved and threatened they grew in time to think it less so. If this new will also had parliamentary sanction afterwards, if they personally were cleared of all responsibility by a free prospective pardon—then they too were prepared to approve.

But the Council too must commit themselves in black and white. One after another they signed—Northumberland standing over them—and at the head of the signatures appeared that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. With more trepidation than the rest, and with sundry mental reservations, William Cecil also signed.

§ 5.

The transaction in very great secrecy had been concluded on the 14th of June. On July the 6th the King died; but the fact was not disclosed till the gang had everything in readiness. At last, on the 10th, Northumberland's daughter-in-law was proclaimed Queen.

There followed a week of suspense. In an agony of anxiety Mr. Cecil prepared for every possible eventuality. He had

to draw up a letter against the pretensions of Mary, as "bastard daughter of Henry VIII": but the actual document he was careful to endorse: "wrytte by ye Duk of Northūblā," Similarly the making of the proclamation he "turned" (as he afterwards phrased it) to his friend Nicholas Throgmorton . . . "whose conscience, I saw, was troubled, misliking the matter." (But Throgmorton also was taking no risks, and lost no time in secretly communicating with Mary.) Alarming news reached London on the 12th that the Earl of Sussex had actually joined Mary, "with innumerable companies of the common people." Who was to take the field against him? Northumberland was for Suffolk's commanding: the Council thought Northumberland had better go himself—it was he who had most military experience. Besides, with Northumberland out of London, they would feel under much less constraint. So the Duke had perforce to agree. On the evening of the 13th he invited his friends to supper—a strange and solemn *agape*; but his heart was heavy as he begged them piteously, for "fear of the Papists' entrance" to be faithful. They promised—Cecil among the rest.

Next morning the Duke rode out. The citizens of London thronged the streets, but only watched in sullen silence.

Things were beginning to look black. From everywhere came reports that the country was rising for Mary. The fleet sent out to intercept her flight had mutinied and declared in her favour. Even London, where the Cause was most vigorous, was glumly and resentfully rebellious.

But Cecil had been very discreet. He had been careful to endorse the most incriminating documents: "written by the Duke of Northumberland," or "written by Sir John Cheke." It now seemed time to take some positive action. He began by approaching Arundel—a likely man, for Northumberland had only just reinstated him in order that he should give a reluctant support to his project. Finding Arundel "thereto disposed," he next "practised" with Bedford and Winchester, both of whom felt that the time was now ripe to betray their late friend and benefactor. On the

19th matters came to a head. Having somehow avoided signing that morning a final exhortation to stand by Queen Jane—"written," of course, "by Sir John Cheke"—Cecil, who had all this time been with Suffolk in the Tower, stole quietly away to join the waverers in Baynard's Castle. He was scarcely come there when suddenly in every quarter of the City the bells rang out in triumph. Church after church took it up; the proclaiming of Mary in the streets was drowned by cheers of delight, and the organs in St. Paul's pealed out a solemn *Te Deum*.

III

THE HIDDEN YEARS

§ 1.

HAVING signed the Council's letter to Mary in which it professed its tardy loyalty, Cecil, while the bells still rang and bonfires blazed in the streets, put the finishing touches to a highly delicate composition—his personal "submission" to the Queen. It was an elaborate piece of work, but the gist of his defence was simple: he had so far lent himself to Northumberland's treasonable project, not out of conviction (certainly not!), but through common, and surely excusable, cowardice. In proof of his unwillingness he adduced evidence of the caution he had used, glancing all the time at the responsibility he had placed on certain others: "I refused to make the proclamation, and turned the labour to Mr. Throgmorton. . . . I eschewed writing the Queen's highness bastard and therefore the Duke wrote the letter himself " (copying Cecil's rough draft, but that fact it was unnecessary to mention). Moreover "I dissembled the taking of my horse, and the rising of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, and avowed the pardonable lie where it was suspected to my danger." In fact he had consistently played double, not knowing which side would win.

Meanwhile he had sent his wife's sister (Anne Coke, who had married one of the new profiteering officials, the lawyer Nicholas Bacon) to meet the Queen and report how he was likely to be received. To be doubly sure, he also dispatched one of his household, a certain Alford, to wait on the Queen at Ipswich. Reports being favourable, he finally set out himself. The Queen received him at Newhall in Essex. She

had always been quick to detect "Master Cecil" in all Northumberland's "devices," and she had not forgotten his forbidding her private Mass; but she had told his sister-in-law Bacon she considered him "a very honest man," and it was perhaps with similar irony that she now accepted his "submission."

There had really been no grounds for alarm. Mary was almost recklessly lenient, and the only sufferer was Northumberland himself. That intrepid soldier of Protestantism, before perishing on the scaffold, proclaimed his devotion to the Catholic faith and begged his hearers to remain loyal to it. His more prominent associates also reconsidered their theology. The Mass being everywhere, by royal authority and the will of the nation, restored, they hastened anxiously to hear it. Naturally the few political notabilities who had not sold themselves to Northumberland were reinstated—among them Bishop Gardiner, who was made Chancellor; but a number of the old Council, such as Arundel, Petre and Paget, continued to serve under Mary.

William Cecil was not readmitted: he was even made to surrender his Chancellorship of the Order of the Garter. It is irrelevant to consider whether Mary's action was wise. She was compelled to admit into her service many whom she gravely distrusted: her choice of trained and qualified men was limited; but for reasons of her own she drew the line at Cecil.

The official account of his relations with Queen Mary, published many years later, is misleading. According to this the Queen actually offered him the Secretaryship if he would consent to change his religion; "but *like himself*," we are told, "he wisely and christianly answered he was taught and bound to serve God first and next the Queen; but if her service should put him out of God's service, he hoped her Majesty would give him leave to choose an everlasting rather than a momentary service." At this there gushes from the official biographer the following impassioned eulogium: "Here was no turncoat, nor renouncer of his faith for ambition of a

Councillor's place, as many would do upon so fair an offer!"

Unfortunately, the credibility of this edifying story is vitiated by one trifling but proved inaccuracy: William Cecil not only "renounced his faith," but he did so in a manner by no means unobtrusive. He went to Mass with the best; communicated, made generous offerings to his parish, piously fingered his beads in public—he even had a priest to serve his household as chaplain. After this, if he missed his "momentary service," it was not for the want of trying.

The truth is there were three safe courses open to him. Had he required the free exercise of the reformed religion he might have betaken himself abroad to Germany or Geneva—as did his father-in-law Coke, and Cheke; as did the Tremaynes and Killigrews and many other ardent gossellers. Alternatively he might have continued as he was in England, keeping his opinions to himself without molesting the faith of his neighbours—an equally safe course and one adopted successfully by his friends Ascham and Smith, among others. Or again, he might profess to have become converted and conform. And this was what he chose to do. Some of his friends were reproachfully scandalized: others charitably excused him as "something honouring the times." Actually he was true to a very consistent principle: *vox principis, vox Dei*—the surest means of serving God was to obey the Sovereign, His vice-regent.

§ 2.

So the next five years passed in patient and masterly self-effacement. While so many of his friends suffered persecution or voluntary exile, William Cecil was content to wait and watch, busying himself prudently with his estates. By the death of his father, two years before, these were now vastly increased, especially in Lincolnshire and Northampton. But the place at Burghley remained a home for his mother for her lifetime, and he himself continued to spend most of his time at Wimbledon or Cannon Row.

Yet his retirement was not complete. He was often at Court and occasionally had official employment. On the clear understanding that the new possessors of Church property should continue "to hold and enjoy quietly the same, without trouble or scruple," he accepted the mission, with Petre, to fetch Cardinal Pole from Brussels to receive the nation's submission to the Holy See. The acquaintance thus begun developed into a friendship worth cultivating. In the following year he accompanied the Cardinal on a diplomatic mission to France. He also sat in Parliament as Knight of the Shire for his native county, and used his local influence in these parts to secure the return of his own nominees.

But in the chief political developments of those days he had to be content with the rôle of spectator. He watched with interest the growing unpopularity of the Queen's projected marriage with the Emperor's son, young Philip of Spain; but he kept strictly aloof from the Protestant rising of Wyatt. Forlorn hopes were not to his taste. When the marriage had taken place he had to witness in silence the government's attempt (in defiance of the advice of Philip) to impose some order on the revolutionary rowdies, by reviving the laws of heresy. But he seems to have opposed some threatened confiscation of the property of his friends overseas. He afterwards claimed proudly:

"Although with danger to myself, I spoke my opinion freely and brought upon me some odium thereby; but" (he concludes piously), "it is better to serve God than man."

He could speak the more freely in that he had powerful friends both in and out of the Council: the Cardinal himself, now Archbishop of Canterbury in place of Cranmer; his Lincolnshire neighbour, Lord Clinton; Sussex, then Deputy in Ireland, and Francis Russell, who had just succeeded his father as Earl of Bedford. Indeed with these men behind him (and especially the Cardinal) who could say but if he remained assiduous in his attendance at Mass, even yet the

Queen might some day relent! But he had other friends as well, more intimate if less important. He was constantly visiting, or being visited by, the Bacons; Lord Cobham (the Warden of the Cinque Ports); bluff Sir Philip Hoby, the betrayer of Somerset, and Lord John Grey, the uncle of the unfortunate "Queen Jane" (who, with her father and husband, had been executed over the Wyatt affair). All these, if not useful then, might well be later. And so too, if fortune changed, would be the band of exiles abroad, Cheke, his father-in-law Coke, and the rest. Cheke, indeed, presently relapsed. After carrying on a vigorous campaign with his pen, he was unluckily kidnapped and brought to England. He then recanted, turned papist like Cecil, and so, soon afterwards, died. But the rest, in happier security, remained obdurate; and Cecil kept in regular touch with them.

And there was reason to hope that their day of deliverance was at hand. Medically the Tudors had a very indifferent record, and Mary seemed no exception. She was approaching forty when she married: it was highly improbable she would have a child. In the eventuality (possibly not remote) of her death, she would inevitably be succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth, Henry's daughter by Anne Boleyn. Now Elizabeth, like Cecil, had conformed to the practice of Catholicism, and with no less appearance of ardour; on the other hand, her whole upbringing, the circumstances of her education, the very condition of her birth, were all part and parcel of the revolution. It was in her that the exiles reposed their hopes, and so did all the rest who had flourished in the days of King Edward. Cecil also was one of these. If ever he were to come back it could only be by the assiduous courting of Elizabeth.

But this might be dangerous. That Elizabeth was implicated in various plots on her behalf, was then, and is now, a matter of moral certainty. A letter to her from Wyatt had actually been intercepted by the government: seditious books (some of them Cheke's) had been discovered in her possession, and there were traitors in her household in the pay of the

King of France. The government was justifiably suspicious and kept her for a time under arrest: indeed she was only saved by the impolitic magnanimity of her sister, who refused to proceed in the absence of incontrovertible evidence.

It therefore behoved Cecil to walk warily. As usual, he was careful to commit nothing to writing; but he was in constant and secret communication with Elizabeth's household at Hatfield. Also he acted as steward of certain of Elizabeth's manors—there could be nothing suspicious in that, for he performed a similar office for certain lands of the Crown—and Parry, Elizabeth's cofferer, was Cecil's very good friend. But always he was insistent on caution. They would have to wait till the time was ripe. "*Prudens*," he was fond of saying, "*qui patiens*."

Patience, indeed, was one of Cecil's most conspicuous virtues. The zealots, less accommodating or long-suffering, won glory in the flames for their extravagances—flames kindled, very largely, by Cecil's own friends of the Council. The victims were martyrs to honest but varied convictions: the majority unlearned, many genuine fanatics, some brawlers, blasphemers, communistic anabaptists and anarchists—the luxuriant product of six years of licence—and at the head of them all, the timorous, unstable Cranmer, changeful to the last; then, in despairing defiance, heroic.

Cecil, sitting in his study, kept a systematic account of his household expenditure and literally cultivated his garden. Events of interest he would carefully note in his journal: the death of his old enemy Gardiner, for instance (*Ep̄s Wintoniēsis*), or the annual number of burnings. And he had plenty of time for reading: *Clemens Alexandrinus* in Greek, *Theodoretus in Epistolas Pauli*—and, what was something more practical, *The Prince* of Niccolò Machiavelli. The logical Florentine was worth pondering over, especially Chapter XXII: *Of the Secretaries of Princes!*

§ 3.

Meanwhile the alliance against France, which the Spanish marriage and Philip's solicitations had failed to secure, was accomplished at last through the discovery of intrigues against the Queen by Protestants in the pay of the French. An army was sent to join the Emperor under the command of the Earl of Bedford. It was to his friend Cecil that the Earl committed his wife and children in his absence, and he constantly wrote to him "from the camp before St. Quentin." At St. Quentin Bedford shared in the imperial victory of August, 1557; but it was not followed up, and the next year opened with disaster. The French concentrated suddenly before Calais, and within a week the garrison had surrendered.

The fall of the town was regarded as a national calamity. It had almost been betrayed once before by Protestant intrigues with the enemy; and its capture now indirectly redounded to the Protestant interest. The surrender, imputed to the government's incompetence, was used judiciously in certain quarters to add to the unpopularity of the Queen's un-national marriage. But though resentful at the loss, the nation was unwilling to make the sacrifice necessary for a counter-attack. Consequently in October a commission was sent over to treat for peace. The negotiations were hardly opened when it became known that the Queen was dying. It was the moment Cecil had been living for.

"It is certain," reported the Spanish ambassador, who about this time had just visited the Lady Elizabeth at Hatfield: "it is certain that Cecil, who was Secretary to King Edward, will be her Secretary also."

And Cecil was ready: his genius in maturity, the fruit of his difficult apprenticeship, of his meditative retirement, all at the disposal of his new mistress. Already every detail of the accession was carefully thought out and tabulated: "To consider the proclamation and to proclaim it—to prepare the Tower and to appoint the custody thereof to trusty persons—to consider for the removing to the Tower and the Queen

there to settle her officers and Council—to consider the situation of all places dangerous towards France and Scotland—to appoint commissioners for the interment of the late Queen—for the coronation, and the day—to appoint new sheriffs under the Great Seal”—and finally, but not the least important: “To consider the preacher at St. Paul’s Cross, that no occasion be given by him to stir up any dispute touching the governance of the realm.” Nothing was omitted or overlooked.

Early on the 17th of November, as Mass was being said in the royal death-chamber, the longed-for moment arrived. It so happened that the Cardinal of Canterbury was also at the point of death; but Heath of York, who had succeeded Bishop Gardiner as Chancellor, took five of the Council and hastened to Hatfield.

There, already in possession, they found Cecil.

PART TWO
HER MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE

“ Thus it is well to seem pious, faithful, humane, religious, sincere, and also to be so ; but you must have the mind so watchful that when it is needful to be otherwise you may be able to change to the opposite qualities.”

MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince* : Chapter XVIII.

I

"THE DEVICE FOR THE ALTERATION"

§ 1.

"MAY the earth open and swallow me alive," protested Elizabeth, shortly before her accession, "if I be not a true Roman Catholic." In view of this profession of faith, there would seem to have been no immediate reason why the substitution of Elizabeth for Mary should have brought in once more the revolution. Among the people, certainly, there was no general demand for a change: indeed the country was overwhelmingly Catholic. Nor was the new Queen's technical illegitimacy any bar, at her accession, to her being approved by the Holy See. Politically, it is true, Mary's government had latterly become unpopular; but to the religious issue that fact was irrelevant. It is also true that the feelings of the tiny minority of Protestants had been exacerbated by the rigorous persecution which the late government had thought necessary in the interests of order. But there is no evidence at all that the people as a whole was outraged, or even disapproving. In by far the majority of counties there were very few burnings: in many none at all. Where they were most numerous, in London, many enlightened Catholics may have been shocked: we know that some of them were; but the practice of burning for heresy was as widely accepted then, by Protestants and Catholics alike, as is to-day that of capital punishment for murder. And there were some, perhaps many, with the anarchy of the Edwardian regency still fresh in their minds, who considered so drastic a policy unavoidable. In these circumstances the conventional theory, that it was the Marian persecutions that

caused the nation to recoil with horror from Rome, is not only unsupported by evidence but is *a priori* unreasonable. The "Bloody-Mary" legend was popularized later—by the dissemination of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

On the other hand, though *prima facie* there was no necessity for Elizabeth to move "leftwards," and abandon the religion of the majority of her subjects—indeed impartial considerations of state-craft would have counselled precisely the opposite—yet certain political undercurrents were present which made it evident to the well-informed that she would.

In the first place, though the revolutionary party was in numbers insignificant, it possessed (like so many minorities) a compensating strength in its superior zeal and single-mindedness. Secondly, there were important vested interests which weighed the balance on the side of the "progressives": all the new millionaires (with the lesser profiteers) were either positively or negatively for the Cause. Even though they had been Catholics under Mary, they would be disposed (other things being equal) to safeguard their fortunes by supporting the religious innovators. Thirdly, during the reforming party's eclipse, a secret but very intimate understanding had subsisted between its leaders and the Lady Elizabeth. Throughout her sister's reign she had been tacitly accepted as the reformists' ultimate hope and consolation. Was it possible she could now forsake them?

The historical prototype of Gloriana, the mythical "Virgin Queen," was at the time of her accession a long-faced young woman of twenty-five; of indifferent complexion, but scarcely to be called plain. Cultured and quick-witted, she had already been schooled consistently in dissimulation. But the duplicity of her temperament was largely natural, and was reflected in a physical duplicity, a seeming bi-sexuality. Harsh-tongued, boisterous and hectoring; changeable, simpering and fantastically vain—she was an extravagant parody of both manliness and femininity. On every problem that confronted her she thought double. She was even divided within herself over the great religious issue: by birth and

education with the innovators, her tastes and inclinations were conservative. Theology was of no avail to her: it was almost the only subject in which she was ill-versed; and though she was not precisely an atheist, religion of any kind meant little to her, and certainly had no influence on her conduct. Taught to venerate the memory of her father, she wished to rule as he had ruled, absolute in Church and State: in an age of prince-worship, she also would be worshipped. And she was worshipped. At no time before or since was an English sovereign hedged with such divinity. Yet though her absolutism seemed almost oriental, though there was conceded her the unprecedented right of setting aside the statutes of the realm and decreeing her own successor—nevertheless her real power was very far from being as great as it seemed. Partly from the irresolution of her character, partly from the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed, she was never consistently, but only by spasms and in details, the mistress of her actions and policy.

For with all her statutory right to the throne, she was actually swept up to it on a returning wave of the revolution. For years past she had been regarded as the representative and nominal head of a party, of that group of very rich men who had been made by the revolution and who in turn controlled it. On old Henry's death they had for a time come politically into their own; for with the boy-King as nominal sovereign it was they who, through the Council, had become the actual rulers of the country. The constitutional gains of these six years the Council had not lost under Mary: owing to the disabilities of her sex she also, except in broadest questions of policy, had been largely dependent on her advisers. Now that a woman was to reign again—a woman, moreover, bound closely to a particular party, and therefore in an intrinsically weaker position—there seemed every probability that the great days of the Edwardian Council would be revived.

And the Edwardian tradition survived in none more intimately than in the confidant of Protector Somerset, North-

umberland's Secretary of State. Cecil, like his new mistress, was also a product of the revolution. It was the revolution that had brought his family to wealth: it was from the ranks of the innovators that he had deliberately chosen those friends whose timely influence had raised him to political eminence. Nor was his allegiance to the new school of thought wholly a matter of self-interest. At the university his intellectual development had been shaped by men of the new learning, and under their guidance he had been drawn towards a religion less exigent and restrictive than the old, one based on the individual's interpretation of the Scriptures and the simple experience of faith. He had found it more comfortable. Not that he, either, was of a temperament deeply religious: nor for any cause whatever, religious or otherwise, was he the kind of man to perish on the barricades. He was the product, in some respects, rather of the secular than of the theological revolution—of the Renaissance, rather than of the Reformation. Especially had he that Renaissance veneration for the Prince as the visible embodiment of the community. Hence the Erastianism that was the essence of his religious convictions: *Cuius regio, eius religio*. It is an appropriate tradition that attributes his first promotion at the Court of Henry VIII to his defending of the dogma of Royal Supremacy, for this was the one principle to which he was consistently loyal. If the sovereign was indeed God's vice-regent on earth, obedience to him covered the whole duty of man. Having been obedient to the Catholic ritual of old Henry VIII, under the nominal "Headship" of the boy Edward he could conscientiously be Protestant and progressive; but if Mary, as Supreme Head, chose to restore her spiritual supremacy to the Pope, he was equally bound to follow her. On the other hand, where the principle of obedience was not involved; and if he were required, not as a subject to obey, but as a councillor to advise; then tastes and personal preferences, as well as the interests both of himself and of his class, all drew him to the side of the revolution.

And the party that was for the revolution now looked to him as its leader. Throughout the reign of Mary he had assiduously kept in touch both with the zealots abroad and with the more pliant revolutionaries who conformed and took office at Court. It was he also who had been the main link between both these groups and Elizabeth's household at Hatfield. It was her accession that would restore the progressives to favour and power, and it was equally evident that the man who would have everything in his control was Cecil. As Somerset and Northumberland had used the child Edward to establish the revolution and effect the triumph of the newly rich, so Cecil, a greater than either, would use the woman they now made Queen to restore what had been lost and make the great change permanent.

He needed, certainly, to be greater than either; for it was no sickly child he had to master and use for his purposes, but a vigorous young woman, imperious of mood and with a mind already formed and hardened. Also she happened to be devoid of principles, vacillating and a prey to the most wayward predilections. Sexually abnormal, her unbalanced passions were constantly being enflamed by some handsome fop who, for his own ends or those of his backers, might aim at seducing her from any consistent and intelligent policy.

Nor, to a mistress so susceptible to physical attraction in the male, had Mr. Secretary Cecil very much to recommend him. When he entered her service he was just over thirty-eight, in the full vigour of his powers but outwardly undistinguished. Below the average in stature, he was an alert and upright little figure, with hair and beard already turning grey, and pale, restless eyes, wary and a little furtive. Though naturally reserved, he was capable on occasion of eloquence and forceful expression: moreover he had a terse form of wit peculiarly his own, and when circumstances demanded he could be affably jocose. But it was remarked of him that he "seldom used a word in vain." As Camden epigrammatically observes: "of all men of genius he was the most a drudge; of all men of business the most a genius." Indeed

the drudgery of affairs was a perpetual source of delight to him: recreations he had none but in his books and genealogies, and in the building and rebuilding of his "stately homes." Interested neither in hunting nor dancing, having never played a game in his life, he found nothing so uncongenial as the frivolous Court where so much of his time had to be wasted. Important business was constantly being interrupted by the necessity for personal attendance on the Queen, at banquets and dances, at the interminable boredom of the masque. Valuable time was lost in keeping in touch with the constantly shifting Court, posting backwards and forwards as the Queen moved out from Whitehall to Hampton Court, and from thence to Greenwich, to Nonsuch or Windsor. Worse still, every summer was arduously interrupted by the ritual "progress" in the country, a travelling almost daily from one hospitable mansion to another; whence further delays in posting, vexatious packings and unpackings, general disorder and (only too often) the annoyingly expensive honour of acting as temporary host. Wherever the Queen happened to be, he dared not long absent himself therefrom. When everyone flattered and grovelled, he too had to flatter and grovel, genuflect and stand long hours on aching and incipiently gouty feet.

Yet it was observed that this very unexciting little man exerted an influence on the Queen that the most brilliant and dashing of her courtiers could not rival. Leicester, Hatton, and the other boobies whom she called by nonsensical pet-names might prey upon her infatuation and sway her temporarily this way or that; but in half an hour the wily and sedate little secretary could always talk her back again. Like the rest, he bobbed and flattered; and his mistress, in moments of irritation, might abuse him and be coarsely insulting; but she knew how far she could go. It was not very far. In her heart she knew he was her master; and, though she would never have admitted it to herself, she was afraid.

§ 2.

Essentially the representative of an unpopular minority, and by law, both civil and ecclesiastical, a bastard, Elizabeth was nevertheless unanimously accepted by the nation in virtue of her father's will. But there was trouble to be anticipated abroad, particularly from France. The war had terminated in an armistice; but a satisfactory peace—one, that is, which would effect the restoration of Calais—was proving very difficult to obtain. Moreover, on Mary's death, the French had a new diplomatic weapon to hand in the claims to the English throne of the Dauphin's young wife, the Queen of Scots. As grand-daughter of Henry VIII's elder sister, on strictly legitimist grounds she had a right incontestably superior to Elizabeth's: as a foreigner, half Scotch, half French, she would have been acceptable, as yet, to no one in England. But if the French, from the base they already possessed in Scotland, were to choose to enforce her claim, the situation would look very unpleasant. However, there was one factor that could neutralize—and did effectually neutralize—this serious menace from France: the support that could be relied on from Spain. Naturally, while retaining his English alliance, King Philip would hope also to preserve the religious allegiance of England to Rome; but it was equally clear that, in the last resort, the religious issue would be subordinated to the political. Whatever line England might choose in regard to religion, the one thing certain was that Spain would never tolerate the annexation of England, through Mary, to the coalition of Scotland and France. This was the real key to the diplomatic situation, and it was the principal advantage that Cecil possessed in his task of restoring the revolution.

The immediate details of the accession he had already arranged in advance; and it was by a characteristic inspiration that, within twenty-four hours of taking office, he had dispatched Gresham, the great London financier, to improve the government's credit in Antwerp. Two days later, on

the Sunday, the new Queen held her first reception at Hatfield, and it was then that she publicly committed herself to Cecil in the following remarkable words:

"I give you this charge that you shall be of my Privy Council, and content yourself to take pains for me and my realm. This judgment I have of you, that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift, and that you will be faithful to the state; and that, without respect to my private will, you will give me that counsel which you think best, and if you shall know anything necessary to be declared to me of secrecy, you should show it to myself only, and assure yourself I will not fail to keep taciturnity therein, and therefore herewith I charge you."

She kept her promise, and the bargain endured to the end of Cecil's life.

§ 3.

From the moment of his admission to the secretaryship his course lay clear before him. Among the Cotton manuscripts at the British Museum there is an important document entitled *A Copie of the Devise for the Alteratione of Religione*. Whoever it may have been who actually set it on paper, the inspiration of Cecil is unmistakably present in every line. Of all the many "devices" to which in his long public life he had recourse, this was probably the subtlest, certainly the most comprehensive and momentous.

The document itself, short as it is, contains an elaborate forecast of the dangers that might be expected to ensue from the re-establishment of the revolutionary faith, together with a careful summary of the most prudent remedies to be adopted. Certainly no one who reads it to-day can continue to speak of the scientific organization of revolution as though it were a discovery peculiar to the present century.

When, inquires the "Device," shall the great alteration take place? At the next parliament. Nothing of importance must be undertaken before it meets, for that would savour

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of lawlessness and rebellion. What dangers may be anticipated from the alteration? Firstly, the Bishop of Rome may be expected to excommunicate the Queen's Highness and place the realm under an interdict. Secondly, the King of France would be encouraged to continue the war "as against heretics also"; and that would necessarily involve Scotland. Therefore it would seem imperative to secure peace as soon as possible, and in Scotland to encourage "those inclined to good religion." Probably Ireland also would give trouble, "by reason of the clergy there is so addicted to Rome."

In England (for the facts had to be faced) it was recognized that the whole bench of bishops and the clergy generally would firmly oppose the alteration; so too would those in office and esteem under the late régime. At the other end of the scale the more zealous of the reformists might be troublesome, resenting what they would probably describe as "a clocked Papistrye or a mingle-mangle." Counter-revolutionary activities might be checked by appointing younger men (favourers of the new policy, if sufficient could be found) on Commissions of the Peace of the shires: at the same time "no office of Jurisdiction or Authority to be in any discontented man's hand, so far as justice or law may extend." As for the bishops and clergy, they may be proceeded against by *Praemunire* or other such penal laws, and not pardoned "till they confess their fault, and put themselves wholly to her Highness' mercy, abjure the Pope of Rome, and conform themselves to the new alteration."

But the process of converting the whole nation would take time. It was typical of Cecil, and a major explanation of his success, that he consistently looked to the future. What he organized was no scamped and shoddy "Five Years' Plan": nothing short of a 'Thirty Years' Plan would serve his purpose. It was for the succeeding generation he would have to provide. "And herein the Universities must not be neglected, and the hurt that the late visitation in Queen Mary's time did must be amended; likewise such colleges where children be instructed to come to the University, as Eton and

Winchester, that as well the increase thereafter as this present time be provided for."

The actual formulation of the new doctrine would be comparatively simple. "This consultation is to be referred to such learned men as be meet to show their minds herein, and to bring a platt or book hereof, ready drawn, to her Highness, which being approved by her Majesty may be so put into the Parliament House." Those "meet to show their minds" (it is suggested) might be Doctors Bill, Parker, May and Cox, together with Messrs. Whitehead, Grindal and Pilkington—all belonging to the old Cambridge set—and to complete the cast Sir Thomas Smith, that fat and jovial old semi-cleric, should "call them together and be amongst them." For convenience, they might meet at his house in Cannon Row. In which event, (not to scamp the details): "what allowance these learned men shall have for the time they are about to review the Book of Common Prayer and Order of Ceremonies and Service in the Church?" Answer: two messes of meat for them and their servants, together with provision laid in "of Wodde, of Coole and Drink." Seated thus cosily about the fire, with their two messes of meat, these worthy divines might set about composing a substitute for the ancient liturgy of the West.

Meanwhile, till the Book had the sanction of Parliament, her Highness "for her conscience" might effect some alterations in the chapel royal, such as the Litany, Gospel and Epistle in English, "and that where there be more chaplains at Mass, that they do always communicate with the Executor in both kinds." The same rule might temporarily be authorized for the realm at large, should the complete Alteration have to "tarry longer."

§ 4.

Such was the scheme already elaborated in advance by the subtle brain of the Secretary. But, since its effective execution would largely depend upon the Council, that body, as

it had been constituted in the last reign, would first have to be drastically recast.

The nucleus of the new Council had already been assembled by Cecil at Hatfield. Of the ten that composed it, Clinton (the Lord Admiral) and Howard of Effingham had been councillors to Mary, but also to Edward before her. The same is true of Pembroke. That nobleman, who had laid the foundation of his fortune (Wilton Abbey) by marrying into the family of the Parrs, had been rewarded, it will be remembered, for his betrayal of Somerset, with an Earldom as well as with the Protector's estates in Wiltshire and Hampshire. He had been a supporter—the chief instigator, according to Northumberland—of the project on behalf of Lady Jane; but he contrived, none the less, to be in the Council of Queen Mary. Altogether a worthy nobleman, and one so illiterate that it was as much as he could do to scrawl in capitals the letters of his signature.

To these three, Cecil had joined six new men; of whom the four most notable were Parry, the Welsh Cofferer (now rewarded for past services with the controllership of the Household); Sir Ralph Sadler, a trained diplomatist; Sackville, a relative of the Queen's—his father had been nicknamed, for his acquisitiveness, "Fill-Sack"—and lastly, he whose vast Russell domains, all pillaged from the Church, formed a potent safeguard for the future of "Christ's religion"—Francis, Earl of Bedford.

Such was the little group, all "well affected to the Protestant religion," that Cecil first chose for his colleagues. Others of more doubtful complexion were admitted presently: the Earl of Shrewsbury, for instance, and that cheerful cynic, William Petre. Nor, for the moment, could Archbishop Heath be excluded; but the Great Seal was taken from him, and given by Cecil to his own brother-in-law, Nicholas Bacon; Bacon, that heavy, domineering lawyer, had the makings of an admirable Lord Keeper. The Lord Treasurership might safely continue with Winchester. That hoary old rascal, already eighty-three, if he was a day, had held his office

continuously since the reign of Henry VIII. "*Ortus sum a salice, non a quercu,*" he would explain, to excuse his remarkable survival-value; and he was to continue his willow-like existence for fully another thirteen years. Something of his pliability, though in a fainter degree, was shared by Fitzalan, the Earl of Arundel; for which reason it was felt that he too might safely be admitted to the board.

The Council under Mary had been an unwieldy body of thirty-five. Its very size was a convenient pretext for weeding out, as the *Copy of the Device* had proposed, those most prominently "of the Pope's religion." As reconstituted by Cecil it was reduced to a more manageable eighteen; but even so, for many purposes, it was too large.

"Her present Controller, Parry, and Secretary Cecil govern the Kingdom," wrote the Spanish ambassador, de Feria, while the Court was still at Hatfield; and "they tell me the Earl of Bedford has a good deal to say."

In this is already recognizable the beginnings of that secret inner cabinet that was to be characteristic of the Cecilian rule. Its composition varied, even in these earliest days. Parry's predominance gave place very soon to that of Bacon; sometimes Pembroke or Sadler might be included. For Cecil, like his master Northumberland, reserved the right to single out whom he would to receive his particular confidences, to some of which it was occasionally advisable that the Queen herself should not be privy.

§ 5.

So far there had been only the obscurest hints of the revolutionary aims of the new government. One of these was discoverable in a proclamation issued to condemn any hasty changes that might be prompted by popular excitement. The original draft had boldly added to the royal title: "Supreme Head of the Church." Were such words legal without statutory authority? On the other hand, might it not be compromising to omit them? Cecil, after careful

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reflection, erased the too significant phrase, and inscribed in the margin an equivocal "etc." To the curious scrutinizer that "etc." was eloquent of transition, for Queen Mary had herself employed the same ambiguity, before finally *dispensing* with her own spiritual supremacy. It is possible, therefore, it was this and similar omens that prompted the first resistance on the part of the clergy. At the funeral of the late Queen, solemnized at Westminster on December 14, the panegyric, preached by White of Winchester, sounded a note of alarm. "Mary," quoted the Bishop challengingly, "hath chosen the better part." To those whose chief intention it was to convey the impression that Mary had *not* chosen the better part, this was the kind of statement that called for a peremptory correction. One of Cecil's legal advisers had already helpfully suggested "that certain of the principal prelates be committed to the Tower." In view of the kind of opposition that would presently have to be encountered in the Upper House, the notion had much to recommend it. The sermon was sufficient justification for placing Bishop White under arrest, and so for the present he might remain. That, at any rate, was one out of the way.

Another unfortunate incident occurred on Christmas Day. Oglethorpe of Carlisle, who was to sing the Mass in the Queen's chapel, received orders not to elevate the Host. Here also Cecil was following advice: "her Majesty in her Closet may use the Mass without lifting up the Host according to the ancient canons." But the bishop resented liturgical instructions from such a source. He announced it was his intention to celebrate Mass as he had been taught. And he did so. All that Cecil could effect was that the Queen, as soon as the Gospel had been sung, should very ostentatiously withdraw.

Meanwhile the order to cease all prosecutions for heresy, followed by the return of hosts of revolutionary Calvinists from abroad, caused the immediate outbreak of rioting and sacrilege in the capital. The Council was neither able nor willing to put it down. Cecil's, like every revolutionary

government, was bound to connive at breaches of the peace when perpetrated by its own too vigorous supporters: it appreciated the fact—observable in certain countries to-day—that rioting in moderation may be a potent aid to the sacred cause of revolution. Consequently a proclamation of December 27 weakly repeated the injunctions against unauthorized change, and at the same time took the occasion to enjoin that in future the Gospel, Epistle and Ten Commandments should be recited in all the churches in English, “in the mode used and practised in her Majesty’s own chapel.” Actually the proclamation established neither order nor uniformity, for six weeks later the dispatches of the Venetian ambassador mention a number of instances of churches being robbed and desecrated by the mob—simple pillaging being indistinguishable from Protestant enthusiasm, and both alike unpunished. On the other hand, in spite of the government’s instructions, “Mass is nevertheless said in all the churches, the Host being elevated as usual in the presence of numerous congregations who show devotion.” If this was true of London, where revolutionary Protestantism was strongest, it was a faint indication of the enormous dead-weight of conservative feeling in the provinces, and of the gigantic task that Cecil had set himself to accomplish.

Meanwhile the Coronation (finally performed on January 15) was the occasion of yet another defiant challenge from the old order. The See of Canterbury being vacant by the death of Pole, the performance of the ceremony should normally have fallen to the Archbishop of York. But, since it was now quite obvious that the government was proposing to launch such an attack on the Church as would inevitably compel the Queen to violate the terms of her oath, neither Heath nor any other of the bishops could be induced to officiate. This was a grave difficulty. The opinion of the nation being what it was, the changes proposed could never be effected except under cover of the full prestige of sixteenth century royalty, crowned and anointed after the ancient Catholic rite. Cecil, in desperation, had recourse once more

to Oglethorpe, shrewdly representing to him that complete intransigence would only confirm the Queen in her hostile designs against the Church. The argument was plausible. Oglethorpe gave way and agreed to perform the crowning and anointing according to the rite of the Roman Pontifical. But he still remained firm about the Elevation, and the only ecclesiastic who could be induced to celebrate the Mass according to the government's requirements was the dean of the chapel royal. So the matter was arranged and duly carried out. And the Queen, without flinching, took the Catholic oath to preserve the rights and liberties of the Church.

Ten days later Parliament assembled to make an end of such humiliating compromises.

§ 6.

It was now, as the Device had specified, that the great Alteration must "take place": it was a session, therefore, critical for the fate of the revolution.

Cecil, in making his plans, had one very important advantage: no trouble was to be anticipated from the Commons. Members of the Lower House were not elected—not, that is, according to modern ideas of representative election—and once they were returned, their function, as a body, was principally to give a ceremonial confirmation to what the government had already determined. It is therefore all the more remarkable that, on this occasion, protests were made against the alleged unfairness with which the elections had been conducted; from which one can only infer that Cecil had taken some exceptional precautions to eliminate unnecessary opposition.

The Upper House had presented far greater difficulties. Fortunately for Cecil, the late Cardinal had left several bishoprics unfilled, and it was possible, by a little trickery, to reduce the representatives of the Church to a mere seventeen. As for the sixty-three temporal peers, every encourage-

ment was given them to vote by proxy; and of the proxies, Cecil saw to it that the greater number were held by Bedford, his vigorous manager in the Lords. Moreover Parr (Northampton) and the son of the late Protector (Hertford) were restored to their forfeited peerages; whilst there were three new creations for reliable supporters—one of them, another cousin of the Queen's, Lord Hunsdon. This last precaution was later to prove very necessary.

Significantly, at the opening of the session, the customary Mass of the Holy Ghost was omitted; instead, the Queen and Parliament met together at the Abbey in the afternoon, where Dr. Cox (according to instructions) preached a violent denunciation of the Church. Had there been doubt in any minds as to the government's intentions, it was effectually dispelled by Dr. Cox.

The least that was required to effect the projected revolution was (1) the restoration to the Sovereign of her rightful domination over her subjects' immortal souls, and (2) the substitution for the Mass of some form of worship essentially Protestant.

To realize the first, and logically prior intention, a Supremacy Bill was introduced into the Commons, and then entrusted for revision to two zealous reformists, Francis Knollys (yet another relative of the Queen's) and Cecil's father-in-law Coke, now safely returned from his travels. This done, the second objective was assailed with *A Bill of Common Prayer and administering the Sacraments*—authorizing, presumably, in place of the Mass, the revolutionary Prayer Book of 1552, as modified by Smith and his colleagues in Cannon Row.

However this, the original plan was reconsidered: neither of the bills was further proceeded with: instead, a combination of the two was drafted—a “new” Supremacy Bill that provided also for the changing of the liturgy. A safe majority in the Commons was in sympathy with the general aims of this “Bill for Abolishing the Bishop of Rome,” but by no means unanimous about details. So much, at least, one

gathers from de Feria's account of its third reading when "Secretary Cecil" could only rush it through by "throwing the matter into a garboil."

Then a hitch occurred, due to two difficulties not entirely unforeseen.

On the very day on which this combined Supremacy Bill made its first appearance in the Lords, Convocation (which was sitting simultaneously with Parliament) gave its approval to a series of Articles that were manifestly intended as a challenge. Affirming uncompromisingly the doctrine of the Mass and the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, the "articles" were embodied in a petition and handed to the new Lord Keeper. Bacon received them, "but gave no answer." To answer them, indeed, would require careful consideration. Since the Church of England had pronounced, as a body, unequivocally for Rome, it was clear that no hope remained of its ever corporately accepting, as it had done under Henry, the spiritual supremacy of the Sovereign; no pretence was, therefore, possible that the acceptance of the proposed legislation could imply anything but the establishment of an entirely new Church. It was a conclusion that the more ardent of the reformers were willing and anxious to accept; but for Cecil, appreciating so fully the weight of opposition against him, and at the same time aiming at an inclusive national settlement, it was a consideration that caused him to hesitate. For almost a fortnight nothing more was heard of the project for abolishing the Pope.

There was a further reason for delay in the difficulty that was being experienced in coming to an understanding with the French. The English commissioners had resumed their negotiations at Cateau Cambrésis; but the French were still demurring about the restoration of Calais; arguing that, if it were due to the English at all, it should be given to their rightful ruler, Queen Mary of Scotland. They had even approached the Papacy for confirmation of their view; but in this they had been unsuccessful. Cecil, acting on advice, had been careful to avoid all relations with the Papal court:

he had even refrained from announcing the new Queen's accession. But in spite of this pointed insult, it was reported by Carne, the English representative in Rome, that "his Holiness hath such respect to your Majesty that he will attempt nothing against your realms." Such unexpected support from the Papacy was in one respect unfortunate, for it destroyed any political pretext there might have been for reviving the royal supremacy; but at least it facilitated the negotiations for peace. Philip, whose own interests were amply secured by the terms that the French were offering, was ready to support the English demands; but not unnaturally, before continuing the war, he wished to be assured that England could make some military effort of her own. Had it not been for the proposed religious changes in England, he would have been prepared, so he claimed, to recover Calais for his ally at any cost whatsoever to himself. But the patriotism of Elizabeth's government was less sensitive than Mary's: it was decided that the establishment of the new religion was worth the sacrifice of Calais. In some perturbation Cecil drafted instructions to the commissioners that, in the last resort, they should agree to abandon the claim. More than a week passed without any news being received from Cateau. On the day that the Supremacy Bill came first before the Lords, another urgent dispatch was sent off. Till something definite was heard the Alteration would have to be shelved. There were even rumours of a separate understanding between Philip and the French. Fortunately they were unfounded. On March 12, the preliminary draft was signed of the peace of Cateau Cambrésis: Scotland was included in it, and Calais—provided that England took no hostile action in the meantime—was to be restored at the end of eight years.

On the very next day the Supremacy Bill passed its second reading in the Lords. It was then referred to a committee on which both the contending parties were represented. But the result of their deliberations was disastrous: the complete expunging of all the clauses relating to a change of doctrine

or worship, and the retention of a merely optional title of Supreme Head. Even this did not satisfy the twelve bishops in the House. Archbishop Heath attacked the abolition of the Pope's Supremacy as involving a breach with the rest of Christendom: "by leaping out of Peter's ship we hazard ourselves to be overwhelmed and drowned in the waters of schism, sects and divisions." Scot of Chester pointed to the anarchy already existing in many parts of Europe, and reminded his hearers that the very men who had been most instrumental in bringing about the schism under Henry VIII had since had occasion to repent it. But the Lords Temporal did not venture to oppose the Crown utterly, and the bill was passed by 32 votes to 12.

However, in such a mangled shape it was worse than useless. The terms of the royal supremacy were ambiguous: the Mass was still fully retained. And meanwhile the zealots were already growing restless. Feeling that they should have something, as a sop, Cecil bethought him of a previous expedient. If they could not have their full Protestant Prayer Book by Easter, at least they could have their Communion in both kinds. And this is how it was obtained. "Bill for Supremacy from the Lords to be reformed," runs the entry in the Commons' journal. It was quickly "reformed" by the addition of a proviso re-enacting the statute of Edward VI, *Against speaking unreverently of the Sacrament*. This enactment, it will be remembered, had authorized, incidentally, the administering of the Communion in both kinds. The Supremacy Bill, with this addition to it, now passed the Commons, and (on the Wednesday in Holy Week) all three readings in the Lords. It was too late for it to receive the royal assent before Easter: nor did Cecil intend that it should ever receive it. Its purpose was this. Once it had passed through Parliament, Cecil could persuade the Queen to issue a proclamation, "by the advice of sundry of her nobility and commons," authorizing the *immediate* validity of the enactment just made. And it was done. On Easter Day the Mass was celebrated in the royal chapel, partly in

English and without the Elevation of the Host; after which the celebrant removed his vestments and, having donned a surplice, administered (in a separate service) the Communion in both kinds. And that, according to the intention of the proclamation, was to be the model for the rest of the nation.¹

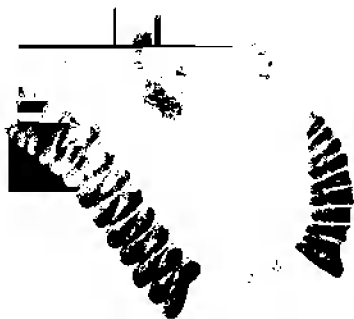
As an expedient it might temporarily appease the elect; but the act as it stood would have to be quietly dropped, for it had failed to abolish the Mass.

And there were two other reasons. The Queen had not yet made up her mind whether to accept the uncompromising title of "Supreme Head" (and thus hopelessly alienate the Catholics) or to be content with the more ambiguous appellation of "Governor." De Feria, some time previously, had found her "resolved about what was passed in Parliament yesterday, which Cecil and Vice-Chamberlain Knollys and their followers have managed to bring about for their own ends"—it was the occasion on which she had ironically informed him that, being a heretic, she could never have aspired to accept his Catholic master's offer of marriage. But subsequently she appeared to him still in doubt about the title: indeed, he was convinced "she would not take it." That was why it was that the bill, passed in Holy Week, had made the title of Supremacy merely optional—an arrangement highly unsatisfactory.

Apart from this, there were some who felt qualms about the legality of such sweeping ecclesiastical changes, when carried out, not only without the consent of the bishops, but in the teeth of their unanimous opposition. "Decency," as Froude observes, "required that there should be some semblance or shadow of spiritual sanction."

Before Parliament reassembled after the Easter recess, Cecil was determined that some such semblance of a sanction should be procured. And the means of his procuring it was one of the happiest of his minor "devices." In imitation of

¹ My reasons for adopting this interpretation of the events of Holy Week 1559 will be found set forth at length in "The Bill for Abolishing the Pope": *Dublin Review*, July, 1933.



SIR NICHOLAS BACON

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similar functions in Edwardian times, he invited eight representatives each from the Catholic and Protestant parties to debate in public some three of the issues in dispute. The subjects for the three days' discussion were to be: (1) the liturgical use of Latin, (2) the disability of a local church to change its rites and ceremonies, and (3) the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mass. The Catholics very obligingly agreed to defend their doctrines first and afterwards hear them attacked—an essential condition, if the "device" were to achieve the desired effect. They also agreed to the chairmanship of Bacon, whose obvious partiality and skill in forensic bullying rendered him, in his brother-in-law's eyes, a most suitable candidate for the office.

The first debate was staged on the Saturday after Easter, in the choir of Westminster Abbey and before a large attendance of the Lords and Commons of Parliament. It having been intimated to the Catholics—this was part of the trick—that the speeches should be extempore, and not (as had been originally suggested) written and declaimed, Bacon opened the proceedings by demanding of Dean Cole of St. Paul's his defence of the first proposition in writing. Naturally he had nothing to show. He was stormed at by Bacon, but permitted as a favour to proceed with his speech as he proposed. It being now the turn of the Protestant Horne, there was a general clattering in the choir as the reformists knelt piously in unctuous prayer for enlightenment: even the stout chairman himself crashed heavily to his knees. The rival party remained seated. But matters had been so carefully arranged by Cecil that there was very little need for divine assistance. When Horne had done, the president again demanded a written copy of Cole's speech, and again it was explained why none was forthcoming. Bacon, we are told, "laughed scornfully": as well he might. Finally, it was agreed that they should write out "what they thought fit on that day's topic" by the next meeting.

This took place on the following Wednesday; but the unfortunate Bishop White, obstinately refusing to recognize

that the debate was what would now be called a "stunt," requested to read what had been put into writing in defence of the first day's proposition. Naturally there had never been any intention that the reformists should be publicly answered: accordingly Bacon insisted that they should "leave that" and proceed to what they had to say on the second question. By this time the deliberate injustice of the proceedings had become patent, and in the course of a heated discussion Bishop Watson of Lincoln had the consummate hardihood to say so. A deadlock having been reached, the alleged contempt of Watson and White was a convenient excuse for declaring the conference at an end. The two wicked bishops were committed by the Council to the Tower, a fine of some £50,000 was imposed on the whole bench and an official report, showing the scrupulous fairness with which the conference had been conducted, was drawn up for publication by Cecil himself. Altogether the "device" had worked out pretty well: the debate—or, at least, Cecil's account of it—effectually discredited the bishops; while the imprisonment of White and Watson deprived the hierarchy of two indispensable votes in the Lords.

Cecil was now ready to launch his final and victorious offensive. He went down to the Commons and explained to them the Queen's unwillingness to accept such an exalted title as "Supreme Head." Could they not suggest some other formula? No, they declared: they could not. Furthermore, they were growing a little tired of the contradictory proposals the Secretary was continually bringing them. At this, Cecil promptly made another. It was the Supremacy Bill in its final shape at last: no reference to any change of worship, and the substitution of "Governor" for "Head." Let them make of that what they liked. In this form the bill was for some time bandied about between the two Houses; and finally, no one dissenting but the bishops, it passed.

There still remained the change of liturgy to be effected. Cecil had reckoned—accurately, as it proved—that the

“conservative” members of the House of Lords, apart from the bishops, would not push for the continued recognition of the Pope. But there were many, as had been shown in Holy Week, who would stand by the bishops in defence of the Mass. Cecil therefore waited till the final Supremacy Bill was well on its way before attempting to introduce a separate bill for the establishment of the Protestant worship. It was presumably similar to the original *Bill for Common Prayer and administering the Sacraments*, authorizing as it did, a slightly modified form of the Prayer Book of 1552. The modifications consisted of occasionally calling the “Minister” a “Priest” and the “table” an “altar.” Also the “Black Rubric,” an explicit denial of the Real Presence, was omitted; and the faithful had no longer to petition to be delivered from the Pope “and his detestable enormities.” By these gentle concessions, backed up by a shilling fine for refusing to attend the official worship, it was hoped that the Catholic nation would eventually become wholly Protestantized.

The new “Uniformity Bill,” though it naturally passed easily through the Commons, in the Lords met with an opposition even more obstinate than that which had been anticipated. But Cecil had taken his precautions: two of the spiritual peers were in prison; two others, on invented pretexts, had been prevented from being present. There were only nine to take part in the last critical division: nine lay peers voted with them, making a total of eighteen against. Thanks to the three new peerages and the two restorations, as many as twenty-one were in favour, and the measure was carried by a safe majority of three.

These two great enactments of Supremacy and Uniformity, the foundation of the revolutionary settlement, had been helped on their way—a further instance of Cecil’s skill as a parliamentary tactician—by a subsidiary bill: for the annexation to the Crown of the temporalities of each bishopric that fell vacant. The gratifying prospect of another little share all round ensured an easy passage for the bill itself

and a more friendly attitude towards Supremacy and Uniformity. And the whole process was neatly rounded off by an act to suppress the few religious houses restored by Mary, and to bestow the endowments of these also, paltry as they might be, on her Highness, the new national Church's Supreme Governess.

On May 8, all that had been done received the royal assent, and Parliament was at last dissolved.

§ 7.

Constitutionally the "Alteration" was complete: all that remained was to enforce the new laws and tender the Oath of Supremacy. Bonner of London was the first to be required to take it: he refused and was promptly deprived. One by one the same procedure was followed with the rest, none accepting the oath but Kitchin, of the Welsh see of Llandaff. By the beginning of November England had not a single bishop left: the spiritual jurisdiction, originated by St. Augustine nearly a thousand years before, had come to an abrupt termination.

But the Oath of Supremacy had also to be tendered at the universities as well as to the clergy generally, and the new order of service had to be established uniformly throughout the country. The latter task was comparatively straightforward, but the tendering of the oaths was a matter that required tactful and cautious handling. Catholicism was still strong at Cambridge: at Oxford it was wholly dominant. Moreover, both universities had suffered severely by the Reform: during Edward's reign, in numbers and prestige they had sunk to the very depths. Matters had begun to improve under Mary; but if the supremacy test were again exacted with rigour, there was reason to fear that the higher education of the country would become extinct. It was a disaster that Cecil would do anything in reason to avoid, and he let it be understood that the oaths were on no account to be pressed. The task, indeed, was so delicate that he nomin-

ated himself as one of the commissioners for his old university, as well as for Eton; and a similar body was judiciously selected for Oxford. “It is a den of thieves,” says a reformer, of the latter university, “and of those who hate the light”; and another—less poetically, but with the same meaning—“there are scarcely two individuals who think with us.” Nor was the visitation encouraging in its immediate results: “Both our universities,” some months later, “are now lying in a most wretched state of disorder, without piety, without religion, without a teacher, without any hope of revival.” Yet there is evidence that in both universities the proceedings of the commissioners had been “mild and gentle, not rigorous.” A number of Fellows and Heads of Colleges were deprived; but there are many instances of others whose refusal of the oath was connived at—“in respect of extreme necessity.” These could be got rid of later, when their services had become less indispensable; but meanwhile it is not surprising to find a vigorous survival of popery, especially at Oxford, where for nearly a generation it continued to be an embarrassment to Authority and sometimes, in imagination, a very disturbing menace.

A similar discretion had to be observed in administering the oaths to the parochial clergy. Latterly they also had suffered in numbers, though not to the same extent as the universities. It was essential to the survival of the new Church that their numbers should not be greatly depleted. Hence the immediate deprivations recorded—some 200 is the lowest estimate—convey a misleading impression that has to be corrected by other evidence: the enormous proportion of parishes that remained vacant, the difficulty of finding candidates for the new ministry and the secret popery of so many of the surviving incumbents. But Cecil was patient: he was thinking in terms of his ‘Thirty Years’ Plan. He had a clear idea of the final shape of the construction he was in the act of creating. Much, as it were, of the masonry of the old building could be employed again for the new. Thus, he foresaw, a kind of continuity would be preserved: the kind

of continuity that already existed between the old cloisters of St. Paul's and what they had now become—Protector Somerset's fine palace in the Strand.

Everyone appreciated from the very outset that the building of the new edifice was Cecil's. It was to him that the returning exiles applied for bishoprics and deaneries in the new Establishment—in the circumstances there should have been plenty for all of them. It was Cecil who drew up in advance a list of the sees that would presently become vacant, their approximate values, and possible candidates who might fill them. Actually the ideal prelate for the new establishment was less easy to find than might have been supposed: most of the "spiritual men without promotion at this present" being either persons of indifferent attainments or extremists who would be impatient of the doctrinal moderation of the State. So it was that only eight of the empty sees were filled by the end of the year. Of these, the sole appointment that was of really important consequence was that to the Primacy. There was only one man conceivably eligible to be made Archbishop of Canterbury: that was Cecil's friend of long standing, Matthew Parker; a scholar, a man of unimpeachable character, and (most important of all) no enthusiast. He also was of Cambridge, though senior to Cecil by some sixteen years. He had not gone abroad during Mary's reign; but neither had he, like Cecil, conformed. He accepted the appointment, with some reluctance, and on August the 1st he was formally "elected."

Meanwhile commissioners, appointed for their "dexterity" in such matters, were engaged in stripping the episcopal endowments (as the new law provided) of the "parcel of the said lands, tenths and hereditaments . . . meetest for Us to take into our hands and possessions." So dexterous did they prove that the "parcel" remaining, when the new bishops entered their sees, was the occasion of some unpleasant surprises. But the so-called "exchanges" took time to negotiate and delayed provokingly the "making" of the new hierarchy. At the end of October an urgent order was made

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to proceed "with all speed possible . . . so as upon election of men meet for those rooms, the same may be placed with convenient speed."

There was also a legal obstruction to be surmounted. So petty a detail by others might have been ignored or overlooked; but it failed to escape the meticulous attention of the Secretary. Some unknown official had drawn up for him the *Order for the Consecration of an Archbishop of Canterbury*, which document, on examination, proved to contain two separate stumbling-blocks. (1) Letters patent for the confirmation of the election had to be addressed to some other archbishop within the dominions, or "if all be vacant" to four bishops. But "there is no archb.", Cecil comments in the margin, "nor 4 bishops now to be had"—no four, that is, with legal jurisdiction within the realm; "wherefore," he adds, "*Quaerendum*." (2) "The order of King Edward's Book is to be observed, for there is none other special made in this last session of Parliament." Another difficulty; for as Cecil observes: "This book is not established by Parliament." *Quaerendum*, again! But the difficulties were surely not insurmountable. Legal advice was taken and it was concluded that the trouble might adequately be passed over by a special clause *Supplentes*: to "supply, by our supreme royal authority, acting upon our own mere motion and certain knowledge" any necessary conditions that might be lacking—"the time and circumstances being taken into account." On the authority, therefore, of this special commission, Barlow, a somewhat disreputable old Henrican bishop, with Doctors Scory, Coverdale and Hodgkin,¹ took it upon him to confirm the Archbishop's election. Thus, what was wanting in jurisdiction was supplied by the Queen in virtue of the spiritual powers conferred on her by Parliament.

On December 17th the same four bishops performed the consecration of the new Primate in the chapel at Lambeth Palace.

¹ Scory and Coverdale (late of Chichester and Exeter respectively) had both been consecrated by the "Edwardine" ordinal, Hodgkin (suffragan of Bedford), by the Catholic Pontifical in 1537.

So the great Alteration was effected and the Establishment constituted which has continued to endure to this day. No one hectically rejoiced at its birth. Of the small minority that desired any change at all, most would have preferred unadulterated Calvinism; the Queen, on the other hand, who detested Calvinism as the devil, would have been much more content with something outwardly resembling Catholicism. But Cecil knew better. And the reformists themselves had to admit that, whatever shadows of popery might obscure the pure outlines of the Protestant edifice, the true substance of Protestantism was indubitably enshrined there. The Mass was done away with, and also (since there was no longer a sacrifice to offer) the priesthood. The officers of the new Church, whatever it might sometimes be expedient to call them, were essentially ministers of the Gospel, and nothing more. Such compromises as remained might plausibly be justified by their purpose: the reconciling of that large proportion of the unregenerate which was either indifferent to the Alteration or too unwary to comprehend its significance. Cecil was for inviting all his fellow-countrymen to the spiritual banquet he had prepared for them. They might not consider it, at first sight, very appetizing; but they would grow accustomed to it in time, and become in the end one national fold, under one supreme and national Shepherdess.

II

CONSOLIDATION

§ 1.

A YEAR had sufficed for the capturing of the objective: its perilous defence was to occupy nearly thirty. Foreseeing very clearly the magnitude of the task before him, Cecil made it his first consideration to strengthen the new position he had taken up and render it immediately defensible.

One of the most vulnerable points in his new line was Scotland, where political developments were bound to react decisively on the settlement he had effected in England. But there were other difficulties to be surmounted nearer home: one of them was the precarious nature of his own personal ascendancy at Court; another, the chaotic condition of the national finances. Material prosperity, as he realized, was essential to the stability of the new régime; but so also, he knew, was the continuance of his own supremacy. If anything should happen to himself, the whole Alteration would assuredly collapse. Patiently, therefore, and aided by Providence, Cecil first overcame the counter-revolutionary forces in Scotland, weathered also the perils that beset him at home, and set to work, with his accustomed thoroughness, to remedy one, at least, of the economic evils attendant on the revolutionary settlement. This last task was only just completed, when there was launched the first of a long series of counter-attacks. But, by that time, Cecil was sufficiently prepared.

§ 2.

In spite of the Treaty of Cateau, the Queen of Scots was still persisting in her claim to the English throne. Throgmorton, Cecil's ambassador in Paris, reported that she was assuming the English arms. Cecil had scarcely made an anxious record of the fact in his journal, when the sudden death of the French King placed Mary's husband on the throne; but ushers at the French Court continued to proclaim "*Place pour la Reine d'Angleterre.*"

Meanwhile, independently of the pretensions of her titular Queen, Scotland, like England, was well in the throes of the revolution. It was during the anarchy that had followed the child-Queen's accession that the movement had really grown vigorous. The nation had quickly become divided between the Catholic nationalist party, which by clinging to the old French alliance, sought to preserve some centralized authority, and the new Protestant, pro-English faction, revolutionary and disruptive of the State. The nobles, impatient of restraint and greedy for the spoils of the Church, were in Scotland, as in other countries, strongly on the side of the revolution; and it was against them that the Queen's mother, the Regent Mary of Guise, was now endeavouring to keep the throne for her daughter. Finally, to support the cause of the "Lords of the Congregation," there had returned to Scotland that revolutionary demagogue, John Knox.

He was an apostate priest, who for his share in the troubles in Scotland had served a term in the French galleys. Since then he had been steeping himself in the sources of authentic Calvinism at Geneva. But a literary indiscretion of this period, his *Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* had now blasted his reputation with someone other than the Marys—the woman who had since come to exercise her regiment in England. On no account would she have him in the country. Nor, for that matter, would Cecil either: he had no use whatever for a fiery

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agitator claiming inside information about the wishes of the Almighty. Not, that is, in England. In Scotland he could blast as furiously as he liked, and egg on his "rascal multitude" to sacrilege and revolt.

To Cecil, in the summer of 1559, the news that he was doing so was gratifying. It was a factor to set off against the pretensions of Mary and the Guises. The two courses now open were, either vigorously to support the rebel "Preachers," or tamely allow the Regency, with the assistance of the French, to suppress them. To Elizabeth the first was abhorrent: rebellion against a Sovereign was anathema; Knox she loathed—loathed also the violent Calvinism he personified. But Cecil felt differently, and he stated his case as follows:

(a) Need for an enduring peace between England and Scotland: therefore an end of French rule there.

(b) The land to be "freed from idolatry like as England"; therefore "if the Queen (Mary) shall be unwilling to do this, as is likely . . . then it is apparent"—since she would be flying in the face of the Protestant cause—"that Almighty God is pleased to transfer from her the rule of the Kingdom for the weale of it." Therefore,

(c) The nobility to be banded together with the next heir to the Crown to remedy all abuses.

Now the next heir to the Crown was James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, a young nobleman serving with the Scots Guard in France, but a convert (it was hoped) to Calvinism. If so, he was an eminently suitable candidate for the hand of the English Queen. In great secrecy, Cecil had the young man smuggled over to London: naturally, before committing herself, the Queen would wish to inspect him privately. He might not be possible. Indeed Cecil himself, who was, at the moment, concealing him in his own house, secretly doubted very much whether he was: his Protestantism might be sound enough, but his general intelligence was (to say the least) undeveloped. However, of that the Queen

should judge for herself. She did so. Lest she had been over-hasty, she had him down to Hampton Court and examined him afresh. No, he was utterly impossible. Alteration, or no Alteration, she must draw the line at marrying an imbecile.

So Arran was definitely out of the question. However, if the Preachers had set their hearts on the match, it seemed unnecessary, at this juncture, to disappoint them. The obvious course was to pack him off to Scotland, where his crazy enthusiasm might reinforce the labours of Knox.

Meanwhile Spain, whose neutrality was essential, had to be assured that England's interest in Scotland was purely one of national defence: religion had nothing to do with it. To counteract, therefore, the rumours about Arran, Cecil played with the proposal for a match between Elizabeth and the Catholic Archduke Charles of Austria—a suggestion with which the Spaniards had been kept amused ever since the refusal of Philip's own half-hearted proposal of marriage.

Now it so happened that, for the present, Cecil could leave the major part of the bamboozling of the King of Spain to an interesting and important personage, who was not yet actually of the Council. This was *Lord Robert Dudley*. A younger son of Cecil's old master, Northumberland, Dudley was of an age with the Queen and had served some time in her household. On her accession, he had attended her to London as Master of the Horse, and (as it was commonly reputed) as her lover; but probably the truth was rather that he lived with her on terms (one might say) of peculiar intimacy. To Cecil he was an exasperating combination of folly and knavery. Though married already, he was commonly supposed to be aiming at marriage with the Queen. Hence his approval of the project of the Archduke Charles. Nothing, he knew, would ever come of that. On the other hand, the Arran scheme might be very much more serious, and as long as that was in the air his soundest policy seemed to be to stand in well with the "Spanish"

party at Court. So it was that Dudley's intriguing saved his rival no little trouble. All Cecil had to do was to echo the same sentiments, assuring the new Spanish ambassador, Bishop de Quadra, that he also was strongly in favour of the Archduke.

The game was risky. De Quadra was very soon warned by his predecessor that Cecil was certainly playing double. Also the Queen was seriously overplaying her part: the restoring of candles and crucifix to her chapel had gravely scandalized the elect, and Cecil himself was under unjustified suspicion of acquiescing.

Meanwhile, through his agent Sadler, he had been conscientiously bribing the Protestants in Scotland, but so as "the Queen shall not be party thereto." And concerning certain of these transactions the Queen's ignorance was not merely nominal. When, for instance, a consignment of money was filched for his own private uses by a too impatient supporter of the Cause, Cecil thought fit to conceal the fact from his mistress. Her unwilling connivance had been difficult enough to obtain: if she learned she was being repaid for her kindness with flat dishonesty, it was certain that no more would be forthcoming. "She shall know the loss to-morrow," he writes to Sadler (by which time she would have been committed to a further advance); but even then, he adds jocularly, "it will be too soon."

More, however, was needed than money, and it soon became evident that, if the Cause in Scotland were to be saved from foundering, Elizabeth would have to co-operate openly and with resolution. The question was, would she? Maitland of Lethington (the Scottish Secretary), who was acting for the Lords, set out for England to plead their cause. It was characteristic of Cecil's thoroughness that, to avoid the likelihood of his bungling, he forwarded instructions to him at Berwick as to the line of argument he should adopt. But opinion in the Council was strongly opposed to interference. Even Bacon thought it risky. As for the Queen, as usual she was in two minds; but her

fear of the French and her loathing for rebellion prevailed over the arguments of Cecil. She decided not to intervene.

It was a critical situation. The Alteration in England called for a similar Alteration in Scotland. The fate of "religion" was at stake; and, with it, the fate of Cecil. It was one of those occasions when everything must be risked on a single throw. In that case, said Cecil, if his advice did not please her Highness, he would like to be relieved of all further responsibility. With that he left her to think it over. Elizabeth, as he had hoped, was seriously disconcerted. Cecil's opinions on some things might be different from hers; but from the position in which he had placed her, what other councillor had she on whom she could rely, with any confidence, to extricate her? There was none. She began to realize for the first time that, for good or ill, she was embarked in the same boat as her Secretary: whatever happened, they would have to float or sink together. Before the end of the year she had given in: Cecil had won and the young Duke of Norfolk¹ was on his way to Scotland.

Norfolk's office, though he was nominally Lieutenant-General, was principally administrative and diplomatic: the actual command of the small army was given to old Grey de Wilton. Meanwhile Winter was dispatched by sea to cut off French reinforcements, and with secret instructions (a very Cecilian precaution) that, if anything went wrong, he was to disclaim any orders from the Queen. The arrival of Winter's ships caused the Regent to withdraw to Edinburgh and Leith; and, by the end of March, Grey's forces had crossed the border and effected a junction with the rebels.

In the meantime Cecil had taken steps to restrict the activities of the French. Just at the time that Grey was entering Scotland, there occurred a mysterious conspiracy against the person of the French King, known in history as the Tumult of Amboise. It was a thing of international

¹ The 4th Duke: his grandfather, the 3rd Duke, had died in 1554.

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ramifications—an incident, in fact, in the general European revolution—and it was largely engineered by England. Its leader, a Picard noble named La Renaudie, had been brought over to London in the previous autumn by Throgmorton, when the latter was visiting Cecil. The Tumult failed in its principal objective; but at this important juncture it gravely added to the embarrassment of the French government, already perturbed by disaffection among the nobles and by the problem of “ordering religion.” At any rate it made certain that, without co-operation from Spain, the French would do nothing about Scotland. And Cecil had private reasons for knowing that Philip also would do nothing.

But, though it was now evident that she was ultimately to be left to her fate, the Regent, Mary of Guise, was still offering a formidable resistance. An attempt by Grey to storm her works was very ignominiously repulsed; and, when the news reached London, it was Cecil who had to bear the brunt of the recriminations. It was he who had been the advocate of armed interference: if this were the result, he had better terminate the business immediately, and on whatever conditions he could contrive.

Reluctantly he posted north. The mission was by no means to his taste and he felt uneasy about absenting himself from the Court. While he was away, the field would lie open to his enemies, who would avail themselves of such an opportunity to defame him and his policy with the Highest. But fortune had not entirely deserted him after all, for on reaching Newcastle he received tidings that promised both to simplify and curtail his task: the Scottish Regent was dead.

After a month's negotiations, and recourse (as usual) to a “device,” he was able to achieve a satisfactory settlement. The French were to be withdrawn and toleration conceded to the new religion; during the Queen's absence, the government was to consist of a specially constituted Council; and finally (the condition which had given most trouble)

Mary was to abandon her claim to the English throne and acknowledge the rights of Elizabeth.

The Treaty of Edinburgh (July, 1560) has been acclaimed as one of Cecil's most brilliant achievements. That it certainly was not. Mary had still to ratify it, and until she did so the agreement was constitutionally invalid. On the other hand, it did in fact secure the withdrawal of the French from Scotland; and, in so doing, it preserved the Scottish revolution. Also, whether Mary accepted it or not, she would now find herself, if she returned to Scotland, in an extremely unpleasant situation. It was as much as Cecil, in the circumstances, could have hoped for, and he had every reason to feel satisfied.

§ 3.

Meanwhile it had been foreseen by Cecil's friends that, in view of the existing factions at Court, his temporary absence might be extremely dangerous to his credit. To the conservatives, the so-called "Spaniards," Cecil was the enemy in chief; at the same time, to the Protestant zealots he was becoming the object of half-scandalized suspicion; and behind both these parties in turn was Lord Robert recognizing in Cecil his chief obstacle to matrimony with the Highest. With Cecil away, the Queen could easily be worked upon. She was already resenting her having been jockeyed into supporting rebellion; moreover, it had been a highly expensive policy, and, from the military point of view, by no means creditable. Cecil's diplomatic success with the treaty seemed a poor compensation: she was disposed even to resent it, as a purely personal score of her Secretary's. He had merely extricated her, at great cost to herself, from the very tight corner in which he himself had placed her. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that on his return from Scotland he found himself virtually in disgrace. And old Vicar-of-Bray Winchester—he of all people!—had the condescending impudence to condole with him. Cecil was on the verge of despair. He confided to

de Quadra his serious intention of resigning. If the Queen married Lord Robert, he could foresee nothing but disaster for the realm.

"Lord Robert," he ejaculated suddenly, "would be better in Paradise than here!"

Later in the conversation he again expressed a wish for this improbable apotheosis. In passing, too, he made casual reference to Lord Robert's intention of poisoning his wife. There was nothing very extraordinary in that. Dudley's relations with the Queen had long been the subject of popular scandal: even at the Court of the Emperor they were "broad-mouthed" about it, and the sudden demise of Lady Dudley was confidently expected at any moment. But what is certainly more remarkable is that, on the very next day, the Queen herself told de Quadra that Lady Dudley—though known till now to have been in perfectly good health—was "dead, or nearly so."

Stranger still, within a very few hours she did die.

It would be irrelevant, here, to offer any conjectures about the "mystery" of Amy Robsart. It is sufficient to record that, whatever her husband's real connection with the affair, contemporary opinion held him guilty. Foreign courts were amazed and aghast; but in England it was soon fashionable to forget the incident. Hints might be whispered, but (in characteristically English fashion) it became one of those subjects which one agreed never openly to discuss. The official view was expressed by Killigrew, a creature of Cecil's:

"She brake her neck down a pair of stairs, which I protest unto you was done only by the hand of God."

Whether by the hand of God or man, for Cecil it proved highly providential. In view of the immediate scandal, Dudley dared not for some time show his face at Court; and the Queen, having burnt her fingers, had recourse instinctively to her Secretary.

"Cecil," writes Bedford, "is now more than any other in special credit and does everything."

In the circumstances he could afford to be generous. To Dudley, whining in retirement, he offered to use his influence to restore him to favour with the Highest, and from that moment onwards he had Dudley safely where he wanted him. Officially, of course, he would put about the story of "the hand of God." But Cecil knew what he knew; and, if necessary, he could make use of his knowledge. And that was why, though Dudley was to be constantly a nuisance in the future, he was never again a serious menace. Thenceforward he and Cecil understood each other pretty well.

§ 4.

Cecil's personal ascendancy, still insecure during the first two years of the reign, was now well-rooted and acknowledged. It was therefore as a fitting symbol of greatness achieved that there was completed about this time in the Strand an imposing mansion "reysed with bricks, proportionately adorned with four turrets on the four quarters of the home, curiously beautiful within with rare devices." It was Cecil House. The builders had been engaged on it some time, and while Cecil was in Scotland his brother-in-law Bacon wrote to report that "all things go well forward." Actually what chiefly interested Bacon was the "privies." That at the west end was one of the least satisfactory features, being inconveniently near an oven and little larder. "It would have been better," he thought, "to have offended the eye outward than the nose inward." But the house had much to compensate for this drawback. Backing pleasantly upon Covent Garden, it adjoined the town estate of his colleague the Earl of Bedford: opposite, but further East, was the palace his old patron Somerset had built, but never lived to enjoy. The house in Cannon Row was still very convenient when the Court was at Whitehall, but it was the new mansion in the Strand that became the normal residence of Cecil and his family: Lady Cecil, Anne, the little daughter

born at Wimbledon during their retirement, and Robert, the sickly atom born to them a year or two later, tiniest and greatest of their children.¹ Burghley, the place in Northamptonshire, was still the residence of Cecil's mother. Vast sums of money, and all the spare time he could allow himself, were lavished on the planning and rebuilding of the house, for he designed it ultimately for his first wife's child, his eldest son Thomas. (He had grown into an unpromising lout, and a source of great anxiety to his parent.) But the estate at Burghley was too far distant from London for Cecil to find time to visit it frequently; and, though he still had Wimbledon, he presently acquired also Theobalds, "a princely seate" in Hertfordshire. It proved a convenient retreat in which to spend his short respites from the Court, and for the future benefit of his little son Robert, he elaborately re-designed the house itself and the gardens of its extensive grounds.

The keeping up of these great houses and the lordly state in which he now lived—in the Strand alone the household numbered eighty persons—was a severe tax on his far from insignificant fortune; hence it was fortunate that about this time he received a notable addition to his income. During the winter which followed the interposition of "the hand of God," death also removed Parry, the Controller of the Household. Besides holding this post, Parry had also been Master of the Court of Wards, a highly lucrative office which was granted now to Cecil. He discharged the duties of the place, in addition to his multifarious work as Secretary, with his usual assiduity and thoroughness: "very providentially," says an admirer, "for the service of the prince and the wards,² for his own profit moderately, and for the benefit of his followers and retainers." Indeed it was very

¹ Robert seems to have been born in 1563. Afterwards there was another daughter, Elizabeth, to whom the Queen stood godmother, at Cecil House, in 1564. Elizabeth Cecil married Lord Wentworth, but both she and her husband died young.

² "Ever endeavouring to commit them," says Camden, "to persons of sound religion."

much more than an additional source of income: it was an important asset to his political influence, and a means (as it was to prove later) of facilitating, not a little, the advancement of his family by matrimony.

§ 5.

"Secretary Cecil," wrote a detached observer some years later, "may be called the King of England."¹ The judgment has some truth in it, in this aspect at least that, for a subject, his private fortunes were linked with those of the State in a manner altogether exceptional. Since his own prosperity depended on that of the government, he could never feel satisfied till the public finances were based as soundly as those of his own family. The government's credit abroad had been his care from the beginning, and Gresham, since his appointment to Antwerp, had worked wonders. But sound financial well-being depended on a revival of trade, and this was impossible without a reform of the national currency. Debased by Henry VIII, and still further by Northumberland, its condition was by this time lamentable; but now that the Alteration had been effected and Scotland secured, Cecil could turn his attention to this secondary problem. During the autumn that succeeded Dudley's eclipse, experts were consulted, schemes examined and a commission appointed for the complete reforming of the currency. The debased coins were duly called in by proclamation: newly minted good ones were issued in exchange. The immediate balance of profit was slightly with the Queen; but indirectly the nation gained enormously by the stabilizing of prices and the resulting increase of trade. And the benefits that accrued were justly credited to Cecil. His was the initiation of the scheme; his, in the main, its execution, and even the scrutiny of its minutest and most complicated details.

¹ Calendar of Papal State Papers, vol. ii.: *Memorial of the Affairs of the Netherlands and the Queen of Scots*, by [Sir Thomas Stucley] 1573. Italian. Copy.

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It was the monetary reform that made the revolutionary settlement in England an economically "going concern"; but politically the great Alteration was not yet proof against counter-revolutionary intrigue. The "Spaniards" at Court were never tired of harping on the *dangerousness* of Cecil's policy. It was a cunning argument, for it was precisely the element of danger that Elizabeth chiefly resented. Shuddering at the political anarchy that seemed inseparable from the cause of the Gospel, she was tempted more and more, for the preservation of her throne and person, to retrace her steps towards the security of the Catholic fold. And just now, if she were minded to do so, was the time; for, during the following year, the General Council of the Church was to resume its sessions at Trent. Would she, in the circumstances, be prevailed on to send official representatives? De Quadra, thinking she might, had already opened negotiations for the sending of a Papal Nuncio to England, the Abbot Martinengo. Thenceforward, behind the complicated diplomatic feints of the next few months, it was this question of the Nuncio that was the real issue in dispute between the two contending parties. If the conservatives carried their point and the Queen consented to receive him, the fate of the Alteration was sealed—and, with it, that of Cecil.

Since the Secretary's return from Scotland, the Nuncio project had been temporarily in abeyance; but, in the following December, an event occurred which indirectly brought it once more into prominence. This was the unexpected death of the Queen of Scotland's husband, the young King of France.

Superficially his death was advantageous to the cause of "Religion." Since the late King's young brother, now Charles IX, was a minor, the direction of the government passed wholly into the hands of the Queen Mother, the snaky Catharine of Medici. Now Catharine stood at the head of the centre party, or *Politiques*, whose principal aim was to hold the balance between the Catholic and very

popular Guises (at the head of whom were Mary's uncles, Duke Francis and the Cardinal of Lorraine) and those of the nobility whose jealousy of the Guises, as Lorrainers and un-French, led them to espouse the heretical cause of the Huguenots. Thus the immediate sequel to the death of King Francis was the rise to power of a party more favourable to the religious revolution, and with very little interest in the Guises' fortunes in Scotland.

So far, so good. But there was another consequence of the change which, to Cecil, was far less satisfactory. From her accession till now, the strength of Elizabeth's position had lain in her rival's connection with France. Even those who were most hostile to the Cecilian policy would never have played into the hands of the French by upholding the claims of Mary. But henceforward all that would be changed. No longer associated with the political ambitions of the French Court, the young Queen of Scots might easily become the legitimist representative of that majority of the English nation which was opposed or indifferent to the Alteration. Indeed, it was from this moment that Mary of Scots came to personify everything that was in conflict with Cecil and the revolutionary settlement he had effected. At any time during the next twenty-five years, the death of Elizabeth—and she was constantly ailing—would have been followed inevitably by the accession of Mary, and no less inevitably by the restoration of the old religion. And that is why, from this moment onwards, as long as Mary lives the future of the Alteration remains precarious.

What, however, was more immediately serious was the fact that Mary's severance from the French interest might now win her the support of Spain. At all costs, therefore, Philip would have to be detached from any combination of Mary with the Catholic party in England. And that was why, for the moment, Cecil had actually to encourage the "Spaniards" and their hopes concerning the Papal Nuncio.

Such hopes were centred in the vaulting ambition of Lord Robert. The latter was now back at Court, and de Quadra

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had been sounded as to whether, in return for Elizabeth's restoration of the old religion, his master would support Lord Robert's marriage to the Queen. The bishop was cautious. Considered as a bargain, he said, the proposal was out of the question; but if such were the Queen's intentions, Lord Robert had better approach King Philip himself. Negotiations continued in this strain during the spring of 1561, with Cecil's complete approval; but he was only marking time till he had secretly prepared a fresh offensive of his own.

This was to be delivered on an extensive front. In the Lutheran Christopher Mundt, he had an experienced Anglo-German agent through whom he kept in intimate touch with the intrigues of the Protestant princes beyond the Rhine. To France he dispatched the trusty Bedford: ostensibly to condole with the widowed Queen of Scots and (incidentally) remind her of that little matter of the still unratified Treaty of Edinburgh; but in reality to make overtures to the Huguenot party and if possible to persuade the French government to boycott the Council of Trent. Finally Randolph, another reliable negotiator, was sent to strengthen the purpose of the Scottish nobles and promise them support from England.

While Cecil was thus secretly engaged, the Spanish project was developing. Whether Elizabeth would ever have married Lord Robert is extremely doubtful, to say the least; but in her proposed reconciliation with Rome she was much more certainly sincere. Apart altogether from her religious indifference and loathing of the extremes of Protestantism, she was becoming more than a little irritated by the slights and restraints she was constantly having to submit to from her Secretary. So far, indeed, had matters proceeded, that people were everywhere talking of the Queen's reversion to Rome as a very immediate probability.

Till well on in March, Cecil suffered the business to take its own course: then he decided it was time to intervene. The Queen, he declared, in any case could do nothing without consulting the wishes of Parliament; and with that

he himself took over the conduct of the negotiations with de Quadra. The wretched Dudley, wholly in Cecil's power, had nothing to do but yield. As for the Queen: "she dares not go against Cecil's advice, because she thinks that both sides would rise up against her."

Waiting on the Spanish ambassador, Cecil suggested his asking his master to recommend the Queen's marrying, not Dudley by name, but one of her subjects: then the matter could be laid before Parliament. As for the Council of Trent, English bishops might be sent to it, but on an equal footing with others, and on a clear understanding that the Pope was to be recognized as no more than its formal president. Also—by way of Parthian shaft—His Holiness must address the Queen by her proper title of Defender of the Faith. No wonder de Quadra was mystified: "These people are in such confusion that they confound me as well!"

It was at this juncture that he received Philip's tardy reply to his original query about the Dudley project. The Spanish King was sceptical. If Elizabeth was really sincere, she might begin by releasing the Catholic bishops (imprisoned since their refusal of the oath) and by allowing her subjects the Mass till the Council of Trent reached a decision.

A more immediate test would be whether she received the Papal Nuncio, who was still awaiting in Brussels permission to proceed to England.

At the beginning of April, when the Court removed to Greenwich, it was still generally believed that the necessary permission would be granted. For Cecil and the Cause, the question of the Nuncio was critical. His reception would virtually amount to an admission of the authority of Rome, and anything resembling such an admission would logically undermine the religious settlement which Cecil had, with such difficulty, effected.

But by this time he was ready. His schemes had been ripening in Germany and France and the promises of

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Randolph had once more stimulated the Scottish nobility. Also Philip was now too preoccupied with his subjects in Flanders, and with the Turkish menace in the Mediterranean, to embroil himself with the troubles of the Catholics in England. Cecil, in the circumstances, felt it safe to strike.

His first blow was directed at certain prominent Catholic "recusants." "Seeing," as he later explained, "this Romish influence toward, I thought it necessary to dull the Papists' expectations by punishing of mass-mongers for the rebating of their humours." By laying these "mass-mongers" by the heels he was able to demonstrate to the world that the government's attitude was unchanged. Simultaneously he lodged an accusation against de Quadra of having engaged in a plot against the Queen. That he had been plotting was incontestable; but in conjunction with the Queen in an attempt against the all-powerful Secretary. Hence it was necessary that the Queen herself should be brought to heel. To this end, Cecil had recourse to an expedient which, in cases of emergency, he was often to find most effective. He put her in fear of her life. There had been discovered, he said, a conspiracy among the Catholics to poison her. With the artistic intentions of the Pickwickian "Fat Boy," he went even further; he wrote out for his terrified mistress certain directions she should follow to prevent any tampering with her food!

After this the refusal of the Nuncio was assured. The Council met for its final decision on May 1. Cecil's determining of the debate was dramatic. With a fine display of histrionic violence, he roundly charged his opponents with Treason. Ably supported, and with equal vehemence, by his brother-in-law, he triumphantly carried the day. The Alteration, at any rate for the moment, was secure.

III

AN EXPERIMENT IN PROTESTANT ALLIANCE

§ 1.

"A REALM," according to one of the Cecilian maxims, "gaineth more by one year's peace than by ten years' war." The sentiment is characteristic of the obdurate pacifism of his later years, the outcome, in part, of earlier disillusionment. Indeed, in military affairs it must be confessed that his genius was least happy, his judgment most open to criticism. And nowhere in his career was this comparative weakness more evident than in the quarrel upon which he now entered in support of the revolution in France.

In some measure he had committed himself to a share in these troubles already. He had taken a hand, as we have seen, in the "Tumult of Amboise": he had promised, through Bedford, at least moral support for any future Huguenot rebellion; and in the civil war that was clearly impending he was so confident of the strength of the Huguenots that he was fully prepared to perform his obligations.

If England was to be embroiled in France, it was of the first importance to come to some definitive understanding about Scotland. The widowed Queen of Scots, on her uncles' advice, had so far refused to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh; or rather, she would accept the Treaty on one condition only: the acknowledgment of herself as Elizabeth's lawful successor. Such a condition, to Cecil, was obviously impossible; for the prospective substitution of a Catholic for a Protestant sovereign would undermine the whole basis of the Alteration. Yet, what was really more dis-

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quieting, the same demand was being echoed by the ungrateful Scottish estates. Such an unexpected access of patriotism was as inopportune as it was ill-advised. Had they already forgotten England's defence of their freedom and religion? If so (as Cecil caused Elizabeth to threaten them), "we doubt not by the grace of God that whosoever of you shall incline thereto shall soonest repent."

It was in these circumstances that the Queen of Scots began her preparations for returning to her kingdom. Might she be permitted to return thither through England? Matters standing as they did, certainly not. Since the establishment of the religious changes the country, especially the north, was reported to be deeply disaffected. If this were true, Mary's presence might be dangerous. On no account might she pass through England. Cecil would have preferred, indeed, that she should not return to Scotland at all. If only she were proposing to make open war on the newly established Kirk, things might turn out well enough. But Cecil felt sure she would not. Though only nineteen, the girl was evidently no fool: she would probably temporize, secretly undermine her opponents, and finally, after biding her time, destroy them. Maitland, still true to Cecil, advised him to intercept Mary's ships. "If," as he pointed out, "the Queen's galleys were allowed to pass, it would have been better if the passport had been liberally granted." So Cecil thought too. Indeed, English ships were already lying in wait, ambiguously instructed that, if the French ships were sunk with all aboard "unknown," it might afterwards be found "well done." "I think," Cecil remarked to Sussex, "they will be sorry to see her pass."

Yet pass she did. Perhaps it was prudently suspected by the sailors that such equivocal orders, if acted on, would presently be repudiated. At all events, Mary reached Holyrood in safety, and Cecil's gloomiest forebodings were very soon realized. The young Queen, content with her private Mass, made no attempt to interfere with the religion

of her Protestant subjects. Reassured by such tolerance and subdued by the graciousness of her bearing, the rough Protestant nobles forgot their suspicions and remembered again they were Scotsmen. One stalwart alone remained stern and unshaken, the sourly fanatical Knox. Still arrogating to himself the determinations of the Almighty, and behaving generally (as Randolph ruefully admitted) "as though he were of God's privy council," he stood forth boldly as the personification of the Scottish revolution. In the semi-barbarous society in which she had come to reign, Mary, in contrast, was the frail representative of a complex and mature civilization. Knox bellowed at her the outpourings of his crude Puritan soul, heaping the coarsest insults on herself and her faith; yet she continued to hear him patiently. She was, Knox suspected, very deep. "I espied," he wrote, "such craft as I have not found in such age." He was right, thought Cecil; and Maitland and the rest were wrong. But at present, unfortunately, it was not with the sturdy Knox that he had to deal, but with Maitland and the mistakenly patriotic Lords, who persisted in reminding Cecil of the advantages—stressed so much by himself before—of the political union of the two realms. But the circumstances were now changed. Under a Catholic sovereign such a union would be shorn of its major advantage. Besides, as he pointed out, if Mary's succession were conceded, consider the danger to Elizabeth! Obtusely, however, the Scots seemed to think very little of this personal objection, when weighed against the interest of the two nations.

A deadlock having been reached, it was resolved to try the effect of a personal appeal by Elizabeth. Mary readily responded, expressing a desire to meet her "dear sister," when the issue might be discussed more intimately. Elizabeth was genuinely delighted at her dear sister's letter; so much so, indeed, that she threatened to exceed once more the part that Cecil had allotted her. From the beginning of the new year (1562), a steady correspondence was opened

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between the two Queens, in the course of which detailed arrangements were made for a meeting in England during the summer.

Now such a meeting would not have suited Cecil at all; and fortunately, as it fell out, an incident occurred in France which provided a pretext for postponing it indefinitely. Certain stone-throwing rowdies had rashly provoked the armed retainers of Guise by demonstrating outside a church in which the Duke was hearing Mass. The inevitable result, magnified into the "Massacre of Vassy," was the immediate occasion of the outbreak of civil war. Numerically, as in England, the revolutionists were weak—a thirtieth, at the most, of the population; and—in this unlike their English sympathizers—they also lacked the great vested interests which, in France, still belonged to the Church. Yet Throgmorton, in Paris, having been himself misled by the compromises of the *Politique* government, had in turn gravely misled Cecil. The latter, assuring the Huguenots of English support and negotiating through Mundt for hired military reinforcements from Germany, entered with enthusiasm into the struggle "to banish idolatry out of France." Besides, as he noted, "the Guises (if they prosper), Spain and the Pope will unite England and Scotland under Mary, and Protestantism will be undone." Here, at any rate, was a good enough excuse for preventing the meeting of the two Queens. "Except," he wrote in June, "the trouble in France shall be ended before the last of this month without our prejudice here, the meeting shall not be this year: the Queen may not by any interview give countenance to the House of Guise." The same day Sidney wrote to Throgmorton: "Our Queen's affection is great to see her, but I think it will not be." Sidney had guessed rightly. "It took not place," as Cecil entered in his journal; and he adds the significant qualification: "*partly* for the Troubles in France."

§ 2.

Elizabeth had been foiled in her desire to meet her dear sister, but it was a more difficult task to persuade her to assist the Huguenots. The situation in France was too analogous to that in Scotland three years before, and since then the Queen's inclinations had grown no less averse from countenancing rebellion in the interests of Calvinism. But Cecil was again to subdue her to his will. Before the end of August there came a tempting offer from the rebels to surrender to the English, in return for aid, Le Havre, which they had recently taken from the government. Cecil's immediate action was indignantly to protest (while still he might) to Spain, that England was giving no assistance whatever to the Protestant rebels in France: his next, to ensure that the Queen should provide such assistance immediately. It was not easy; but he succeeded, at length, with the aid of Gresham. From Antwerp that astute financier wrote a piteous tale of the declining English prestige on the Continent, the result (it seemed) of the Queen's apparent weakness, and of the lamentable effect this was having on her credit. The plea was convincing. Besides, as Cecil observed, Le Havre would be a useful pawn to hold for the eventual return of Calais. Consequently, in September, by a Treaty agreed upon at Hampton Court, England arranged to provide 6000 troops: 3000 for Le Havre, and the remainder to reinforce Rouen and Dieppe.

As a send-off to the expedition, Cecil unmasked his first "conspiracy." In connection with the coming of the Papal Nuncio he had contrived to suggest, with good effect, the existence of a purely anonymous plot against the Queen; but on this occasion he was able to name a particular conspirator and arrest him—thus giving to the business an air of much greater verisimilitude.

We first hear of Arthur Pole as writing to Cecil in December 1559, saying he had been informed he could be of service to Her Majesty, which would give him much satisfaction.

Cecil was to receive many similar letters in the future: it is difficult to recall a single instance in which the writer was unable to be of service, in some fashion, sooner or later. Cecil's reply to Pole is wanting—to communications of this nature he rarely kept copies of his replies—but the *young* man is next heard of as attempting to make capital out of his family connections. He was a nephew of the late Cardinal: therefore of the royal house of York and with pretensions (possibly) to the throne of England. On the strength of this fact, he made overtures to the Spanish ambassador, apparently as a claimant to the throne in the Catholic interest. De Quadra refusing to have anything to do with him, he next approached Guise: offering to surrender his claims in the interest of the Duke's niece, Mary of Scots. Forthwith he and his brother, just before the sailing of the English expedition, set out to join the Duke in Paris. Arrested (as might have been expected) in the act of embarking, they were brought back to London, examined and committed to the Tower.

The story of the Poles ends there, a little disappointingly for Cecil. From their examination he had learnt something—not much—which might be used against de Quadra later; but no one had been fool enough to be properly incriminated. Still, the exposing, just then, of such a "devilish conspiracy" was useful for purposes of propaganda: it revealed an example of the disloyal "practising" of the papists, and convinced the world (or it should have done) of the laudability of succouring the "Tottering Church of Christ in France."

§ 3.

Under these happy auspices the English had just taken over Le Havre when to Cecil and his friends at home there loomed up suddenly a threatening spectre of disaster: the Queen fell dangerously ill with the smallpox. For a little while her life was all but despaired of. Cecil was in agitated attendance, night and day, in a room adjoining the Queen's;

and there an emergency meeting of the Council was summoned, to determine the course of action if Elizabeth were to die on their hands. The delicate matter of the succession could now be shelved no longer. To Cecil and the Protestants the only possible candidate seemed Catharine Grey, Lady Jane's sister. At an earlier date, when the Dudley-Spanish intrigue was threatening, they had married Lady Catharine—the Queen had been furious when she heard of it—to Lord Hertford, son of the Protector Somerset: had the worst actually happened then, Cecil and his friends had been resolved to abandon Elizabeth and make a bid to replace her by the Hertfords. It had been found unnecessary; but in the event of Elizabeth's death it was still Lady Catharine they were determined should succeed her. At the meeting of the Council the claims of the Queen of Scots were scarcely mentioned; but the "conservatives" present were sufficiently strong to prevent any decision for Lady Catharine: if anything happened, the rights of the various candidates should be submitted to legal examination. Then, just as the outlook for Cecil was at its blackest, the Queen's condition unexpectedly took a turn for the better.

The danger, for the moment, was averted; but to prevent its recurrence it was important that Parliament should meet at the earliest possible moment, and (if the Queen would suffer it) determine the matter for good. And Cecil could arrange how the matter would be determined by Parliament.

Meanwhile the military fortunes of the Church of Christ in France had been tottering to the verge of collapse. It was the middle of October that the Queen was taken ill: before the month was out, Rouen, together with its English defenders, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Here was a pretty story to relate to her convalescent Highness. Who should do it? Not Cecil. It was the kind of thing which would certainly come better from Dudley. He, since the illness of his mistress, had grown more highly in favour than ever. He had even been admitted to the Council. Let Dudley tell her: it was now Cecil's turn to be ill!

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Nor did matters improve. November passed in vain negotiations. The Huguenots had badly compromised themselves by admitting the English into France: they had laid themselves open to a plausible accusation of treason, and the compensation they hoped for in the field had proved disappointingly inadequate. More loyal, however, to their allies than to their country, they broke off their parleys and attempted to retrieve the situation by a fresh offensive in Normandy. It failed, and they were compelled to fall back on their base at Orleans; but at any rate Le Havre continued to hold out: there seemed no reason why it should not do so indefinitely. Therefore Cecil could reassure the Queen that, whatever happened to her gallant allies, Le Havre remained to her as a pledge for the restoration of Calais. And that, after all, had been her main reason for entering into the war. Had it not?

§ 4.

Parliament was due to assemble in January. The need for supplies for the war was a sufficient pretext for summoning it; but Cecil required of it other things besides. As de Quadra observed: "Ever since this war in France, the Protestant preachers have clamoured from the pulpit for the execution of 'Papists.'" It would certainly be a pity not to employ this war-time enthusiasm for completing another stage in the process of making the nation Protestant. Also—but this was an intention that had to be concealed at present from the Queen—something, once and for all, had to be decided in the matter of the succession.

A master of the arts of publicity and mass-suggestion, Cecil always took care that any critical meeting of Parliament should happen to coincide with some sensational discovery of the misdoings of his political opponents. On this occasion it was the Spanish ambassador he selected as his victim. It so fell out that, a few days before Parliament assembled, a Frenchman was shot in the Strand, and it was through

Durham House (the Spanish embassy) that the assassin made good his escape. Cecil needed nothing more. Already, in the previous summer, he had tampered with the ambassador's secretary, obtained from him secret papers and even intercepted dispatches. The contents had not been as conclusive as he could have wished, but he had enough to make a plausible charge. In fact he could accuse de Quadra of a series of misdemeanours: abetting the Poles' conspiracy, encouraging treasons in Ireland and admitting English subjects to hear Mass in the embassy chapel. Actually, as Cecil knew, de Quadra had rebuffed the advances of Pole; the trouble with O'Neil in Ireland had no connection with Spain, and as to persons resorting to the Spanish chapel for Mass, the Bishop asserted bluntly they were morally entitled to do so. Cecil blustered gallantly. The Bishop, he said, would have to leave Durham House and return to Spain. Actually he did neither, for the incident, by this time, had served Cecil's purpose. "The meaning of it all," as the victim observed, "is that they wish to dishearten the Catholics when the Parliament will bring them together from all parts of the realm."

Simultaneously with Parliament there met the first Convocation of the newly established Church. Cecil put up two of his clerical friends to preach to the respective assemblies: Day to the ecclesiastics in St. Paul's and Dean Nowell to the Parliament at Westminster. A bill was already drafted for the execution of the imprisoned Catholic bishops: consequently the substance of each sermon was the moral justification of such an act.

The next step lay with the Lord Keeper. In his speech from the throne, Bacon dwelt at length on the manifold iniquities of the Guises, the expenses incurred in the very just war and (with special reference to "the late devilish conspiracy") the traitorous proceedings of the disloyal faction at home.

Naturally, nothing was said by Bacon about the succession; but this was the subject which the dutiful commons (at

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Cecil's prompting) began immediately to debate. The Queen of Scots was summarily rejected as an alien, and the only rightful claimant was proclaimed to be the Lady Catharine. An Address to the Crown was accordingly prepared and presented. Her Majesty was informed that nothing would be more pleasing to her loving subjects than her marriage; but meanwhile, for the safety of the realm, she was entreated to permit Parliament in this present session to provide for her immediate successor. In return she was eagerly promised "the most penal, sharp and terrible statutes to all who should practise against her safety."

And in this they meant what they said. Cecil's original Bill, for putting to death those who refused to receive the new religion, had been rejected (thanks to the eloquence of the Catholic peers) by the Lords; but a revised draft was now submitted, extending the obligation of taking the oath of Supremacy to all clergy, beneficed or unbeneficed, to all candidates for university degrees and all lawyers: moreover a refusal to take the oath after three months was to be punishable as treason. The new Bill, by striking at those influential groups in the community which were most obstinate in their allegiance to the old religion—the legal profession and the universities—marks an important step in the gradual process of forcibly converting the nation to Protestantism.

To facilitate the passage of the revised Bill through the Lords, a cunning proviso was added:

That forasmuch as the Queen's Majesty is otherwise sufficiently assured of the faith and loyalty of the temporal lords of Her Highness' Court of Parliament, therefore this Act shall not extend to compel any temporal person, of or above the degree of baron of this realm, to take the oath abovesaid.

This clause, in conjunction with the circumstances that produced it, stultified the ostensible purpose of the Bill as *An Act for the assurance of the Queen's Majesty's royal*

power—but it ensured its passing the Upper Chamber. The temporizers wavered and the opposition of the die-hards was outvoted.

In his speech in the Commons, Cecil, as a rule so coldly matter-of-fact, showed how he could soar, when occasion demanded, to the loftiest flights of imagination. Devilish plots, he affirmed, were being made against Her Majesty's life: the King of Spain was threatening her with war. And why? Simply because she had refused to be represented at the popish Council at Trent. The Pope himself was ready to squander millions to promote a war upon England. Confronted with such perils, they should reject no means for the securing of Her Highness' safety. He was ably backed up by his seconder, Knollys, and the Bill was triumphantly passed.

Other business presented no serious difficulties. Generous subsidies were voted for the war, and Cecil's social legislation—Bills for stabilizing prices and labour conditions, and for grappling with the problem of pauperism—all passed virtually unopposed. The social diseases of the body politic, widespread unemployment, stark poverty and increasing robberies and disorders, were matters to which the Secretary gave his constant attention. He recognized them as the inevitable consequences of the Change, a sequel to the original confiscations and the lawless tyranny of the new rich. Fundamentally he knew they were at present incurable; but, what he could not remedy, he could to some degree palliate—even at the risk of personal odium to himself.

However, the problem of the succession was still no nearer solution. The Queen would not have Catharine at any price: she hated her. Cecil vetoed any decision in favour of Mary as likely to lead to "conspiracies." Possessed, moreover, by a morbid terror of her own mortality, Elizabeth resented these anticipations of her demise: they were as welcome to her, she complained, as a death's head or a winding-sheet. Despairing of any result from the address, Cecil had drafted a Bill to confirm (in the event of the

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Queen's death) supreme authority to the Council, until such time as Parliament should provide for a lawful successor. It was not proceeded with: it would have been perfectly useless if it had passed. In that era of Prince-worship, no Council, however legally constituted, could have endured for a day without the mystic sanction of royalty. And none knew this better than Cecil.

What, then, was to be done? Ultimately, nothing. In proroguing Parliament after its three months' session, the Queen made the only answer she would deign to her subjects' loving petition. Elizabeth's style was her own, as tortuously obscure as her mind, and there is never any doubt as to when it is she, and not Cecil, who is speaking:

"Think not you had needed this desire if I had seen a time so fit, and it so ripe to be denounced. The greatness of the cause therefore and need of your returns doth make me say that which I think the wise may easily guess, that as a short time for so long continuance ought not to pass by rote, as many telleth tales, even so as cause by conference with the learned shall show me matter worthy utterance for your behoof, so shall I more gladly pursue your good after my days, than with my prayers to be a means to linger my living thread."

Let her loving subjects make of that what they pleased!

In the urgent matter of the succession Cecil had been foiled. Nor did his new penal law succeed in its principal purpose. There occurred an unforeseen hitch. The oath was first tendered to Bishop Bonner, formerly of London—he who, through the conspicuous, but reluctant, part he had taken in the Marian persecutions, was the most vindictively hated by the reformers. But Bonner, a trained lawyer, had discovered a tiresome flaw in its legality. By the terms of the statute, the oath had to be submitted to him by his ordinary, the Protestant Bishop of Winchester; but the recent episcopal appointments in the State Church, invalid in the eyes of Rome and lacking as yet even the sanction of

Parliament, were of very dubious validity. If the new bishops were legally no bishops at all, then there was no one to tender the oath. It was not the first time that Cecil had been tripped up by legal pedantry, but in this instance his reputation has gained by the accident. For the revolutionaries were in a mood for vengeance. Already Grindal of London had advocated the torturing of Catholic priests, and Nowell was speaking for many besides Cecil when he justified by the Old Testament the slaying of "false teachers." Indeed, had it not been for Bonner's astuteness, the government would have been committed to a persecution compared with which Mary's would have seemed triflingly lenient. As it was, a subsequent Parliament remedied the legal deficiency; but by then it was too late for a general massacre. The revolutionary party was still in so small a minority that it could only establish a reign of terror under cover of an hysterical war-panic. So it was that the Catholic bishops, doomed to linger in confinement, were denied the privilege of martyrdom.

§ 5.

Before the Parliament was prorogued, the situation in France had changed disastrously. In February, Guise was assassinated by an agent of the Protestant Coligny, and very shortly afterwards the contending parties came to terms. Condé, the Huguenot leader, having accepted from the government a measure of religious toleration, courteously thanked Elizabeth for the aid she had provided, and ventured to presume she would now be good enough to withdraw her forces from Le Havre. As for Calais, he would do his best to have it returned to her at the expiry of the specified eight years from the signing of the Peace of Cateau.

Elizabeth's reply was to curse him vigorously. Her late ally, she said, was a perfidious rogue, and she swore she would hold Le Havre till Calais was duly restored. Condé, having pleaded with her in vain, had no alternative but to wipe out, if possible, the odium of his original treason by

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helping to expel his old allies. But Le Havre was strongly held, and it could always be revictualled from the sea. Grimly determined, Cecil put all his energies into organizing the continuance of the war. He supervised everything: stores, ordnance, coastal defences, the raising and training of fresh levies—the whole drudgery of the struggle he took charge of personally and performed with his usual efficiency. But fortune was against him. In the early summer the town of Le Havre was stricken by the plague and its garrison went down by hundreds. Draft after draft was sent over to replace the enormous casualties, but before very long it became clear that the task was hopeless. In July the poor remains of the garrison were withdrawn. Even that was not the worst, for they brought the infection with them, and spread it devastatingly throughout the length and breadth of England.

By the beginning of the new year, it being manifestly impossible to continue the war any longer, Cecil's only hope was to win by bluff what he had failed to obtain by arms. But his cards were poor, and he was singularly unfortunate in the two partners he employed to play them—Throgmorton and his old friend, Smith. In the early stages of the war, Throgmorton, never a *persona grata* at the Louvre, had transferred himself to the camp of Condé. Having subsequently been captured by the enemy, he was now virtually a prisoner in the hands of the French government. So it was that the peace negotiations were entrusted primarily to his successor, Sir Thomas Smith; though Smith was instructed to co-operate in everything with Throgmorton. It was clearly useless to hope any longer for the return of Calais; but England still held four hostages for the fulfilment of the Cateau Treaty, for whose release it might still be possible to drive a bargain. Cecil asked half a million crowns: a sum which would help to disguise the military failure of the war. Catharine of Medici agreed to pay 120,000—30,000 for each. The matter standing thus, Cecil instructed Smith and Throgmorton to climb down, as

might be necessary, to 400,000, to 300,000, or even (if the worst came to the worst) to 200,000. Throgmorton and Smith obeyed their orders and haggled. Catharine remained unshaken: "nor," she said, "did she merchandize, as the English do, but cast in her mind what was reasonable and too much, and that she offered at the first."

At this, Smith (who had not Throgmorton with him at the interview) made a very regrettable blunder. When Catharine bade him make up his mind quickly, for on the following day the Court was to remove from Troyes, he begged her urgently to wait a little longer—*till fresh instructions should arrive from England*. Throgmorton, on hearing of this *gaffe*, waxed justly indignant. What did Smith mean by hinting that the Queen would accept anything less than her final demand for 200,000? Either he was a fool, or he was keeping something back.

And it was just at this moment that his smouldering suspicions received what appeared to be damning confirmation. The courier who had brought their instructions from England, had been given by Cecil a second sealed packet, which he was to deliver to the ambassadors only in the event of a manifest deadlock in the negotiations. Judging the moment to have now arrived, the courier duly produced his second packet. The ambassadors opened it in each other's presence and discovered they were empowered to accept whatever Catharine cared to offer!

It was an awkward moment for Smith, who afterwards described what happened as follows:

"Straight Sir Nicholas, as though it had been that which he looked for, with a girning smiling countenance said, why did he say he had another commission?"

Poor Smith tried to explain. He had not said he had another commission, but only that another might be expected.

This was too much for Throgmorton:

"Marry," he returned, furiously, "you told her!"

"I told her?" exclaimed Smith: "why or how should I tell her, when I knew not of it myself?"

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Throgmorton gazed a moment at his colleague's fat, innocent countenance, with its incongruous great whiskers and moustaches, then blazed out suddenly in uncontrollable fury:

"Thou liest!" he cried, "like . . ." (and here he hastily cast about in his mind for the most fitting epithet) "like an whoreson traitor as thou art!"

At this Smith (so he says) drew his dagger, and it was as much as the astonished courier could do to keep the two worthies apart. While his antagonist puffed and struggled, Throgmorton seized the opportunity to sketch a vivid word-picture of Smith's character, career and antecedents. He was not a gentleman at all, but a beggarly scholar, an arrant knave—"and such other injuries as came next to hand out of his good store."

In such a fashion did Her Majesty's ambassadors accept peace from France in April, 1564. It was unfortunate that it should have been necessary to employ men of the type of Smith and Throgmorton to represent the nation at the French court; but some measure of the shame, it must be confessed, is due to Cecil. Compared with Catharine's princely assessment of "what was reasonable and too much," his mean haggling over crowns seems a petty and unworthy huckstering. The war itself had been costly enough and achieved nothing: the peace brought England, in the world's esteem, to the deepest degradation she has known. But what was national honour when weighed in the balance against "Religion"?

Cecil, in London, read the ambassadors' official report. He also read Smith's account of his little difference with Throgmorton. Then he carefully endorsed both documents and filed them for future reference.

IV

"PRACTISING"

§ 1.

THIS is not the place to examine the controversies that have arisen concerning the latter years of Queen Mary's rule in Scotland—her second marriage, the intrigues and violence that followed it, her relations with her husband's murderer and her imprisonment and escape to England. In the drama of these years it is Mary herself who dominates the scene: Cecil, so important a character in the succeeding tragedy, is for the present merely "in the wings." Nevertheless his presence "off" is never forgotten. All the while we are acutely conscious of his watching, "practising" (as he would have called it) and patiently waiting. Indeed, during the four years which followed the Treaty of Troyes, this watching and waiting was his chief preoccupation.

From the moment Queen Mary returned to Scotland, what had mainly been worrying the English government was whom she would elect to marry. Still very young, as personally attractive as she was politically ambitious, she was not expected to remain a widow. The chief danger, therefore, from Cecil's point of view, was that she would marry some foreigner—the French King, perhaps, or Don Carlos. Such an alliance, she was informed, would be interpreted in England as an act of hostility. But Mary was not easily intimidated. Arran was impossible. The young King of France, apart from being her brother-in-law, was only a boy in his teens. Lady Lennox had already suggested her son, Lord Darnley. She being a daughter of Henry VIII's elder sister, and having married a Lennox-

Stuart, her son had the advantage of uniting in himself the two royal families of Stuart and Tudor. But Mary herself was aiming higher, at the son of King Philip, Don Carlos. Negotiations had been in progress up to the death of de Quadra (a victim of the war plague in the autumn of 1563) and they were still continuing, as Elizabeth was aware. As a counter-attraction, Cecil prevailed on the Queen to make a show of offering Mary her own "Robin"; who, to qualify him for such a match, was raised to the Earldom of Leicester. To Mary's envoy, Melville, the reluctant suitor (whose interest lay solely in England) could only plead a *non sum dignus*. Speaking for once in his life the truth, he confessed he was "not worthy to wipe her shoes." The proposal, he added, had originated with his secret enemy, Mr. Cecil. And no doubt this was true. Dudley, though no longer dangerous, was always troublesome: he was for ever up to *something*. It would have been a brilliant stroke to get rid of him for good, and provide at the same time for Mary a mean and discreditable marriage. But this was too much to expect. Elizabeth was not really in love with "Robin," nor with any of her later favourites. Physically or psychologically, she was as incapable of normal passion as of matrimony. But she was equally incapable of existing without a man, some good-looking male to fondle and caress. Dudley was the first of these strangely unpleasant attachments, and the most enduring. She would never marry him, but she liked to have him about her—"like a little dog," as she herself explained. Furious at his numerous infidelities with other women, she would certainly never have parted with him to her rival of Scotland.

However, in obedience to Cecil she went through the form of offering Dudley: or even, as an alternative, Lord Darnley. Neither suggestion was meant seriously: nor was the promise that, whichever of the two Mary chose to marry, Elizabeth would acknowledge her as her successor. Mary, at this, made a final appeal to de Quadra's successor in London, Don Guzman de Silva. Was there any hope at

all of Don Carlos? De Silva had to answer, none. Don Carlos (though the fact was kept dark) was now a violent and dangerous maniac. His name might serve as a diplomatic stalking-horse, but an actual marriage was out of the question.

Disappointed of Spain, Mary had to fall back on the Lennox offer. Darnley, after some shilly-shallying on Elizabeth's part, was allowed to visit her in Scotland. Exceptionally shrewd in other matters, Mary was as liable as any woman to lose her judgment in an affair of the heart. She fell desperately in love with the handsome young wastrel and within a few months of his arrival had married him (July 1565). Cecil might have commented, as he did about Dudley: "*Nuptiae carnales a laetitia incipiunt, et in luctu terminantur.*"

The question that arises, is, why did he permit it to happen? Darnley was of royal blood, a possible Catholic candidate for the English throne. His alliance to Mary might have led to all manner of complications. Yet with the fullest knowledge of what was afoot, he deliberately gave permission for Darnley to repair to Scotland. It was a blunder so out of character that people have seen in it an ultra-subtle plot: to ruin Mary by marrying her to an unprincipled scamp. Even at the time, Randolph reported it as "spoken to his face, that the sending of Darnley home was done of purpose to match this Queen meanly, to some further end than to live in amity." But such an interpretation is unnecessarily far-fetched and improbable; nor can it be reconciled with the opinions on the matter that Cecil has recorded in his private journal. A far simpler explanation, and one perfectly adequate, is Melville's:

"Which license was procured by the means of the Secretary Cecil, not that he was minded that any of the marriages should take place, but with such gifts to hold the Queen unmarried as long as he could. For he persuaded himself that my Lord Darnley durst not proceed

in the marriage without consent of the Queen of England first obtained to the said marriage; his lands lying in England, and his mother remaining there: so that he thought it lay in the Queen his mistress her own hand, to let that marriage go forward, or to stay the same at her pleasure."

In short, it was a simple miscalculation. Darnley, when summoned to return, chose unexpectedly to risk "his lands, right and titles in England." Cecil then protested vigorously, sending Throgmorton to declare "how much it shall miscontent her Majesty"; but it was then too late.

The sequel exceeded anything that Cecil could possibly have hoped for. One of Mary's first acts was to turn with fury on her intriguing half-brother, Murray, whom she expelled from the Kingdom. But Murray had the support of Cecil. Elizabeth might upbraid him publicly for the amusement of foreign ambassadors, but the scene had been cynically rehearsed the day before with Secretary Cecil as stage manager. In the meantime Darnley was making himself daily more odious and offensive to his wife; while she, deprived of friendship and advice in the quarter she had expected, took to relying more and more on the devotion of her secretary, the Italian David Rizzio. Darnley, growing jealous, allied himself to her enemies, Earl Morton and his gang, and to the exiles under Murray in England. Together they abetted him in his revenge. On March 1, 1566, Randolph informed Cecil of a plot on foot to kill the Queen's secretary. Bedford, on the 6th, corroborated the report. On the 9th the gang, with Darnley among them, broke into the room at Holyrood where Mary was dining, dragged forth Rizzio and hacked him to pieces in the Queen's actual hearing. It was a deed (according to Knox) "most just and worthy of all praise."

Mary, when she was forced to witness the murdering of her secretary, was six months gone with child. Having swiftly reduced her vicious husband to subjection and

wrung from him the secret of the whole conspiracy, she acted with remarkable vigour. Cunningly taking into favour the arch-plotter, Murray, she banished the underlings, Morton and Ruthven; thereby effectually splitting the confederation. So matters stood when, on June 19, she gave birth to the boy who was to unite, one day, the Crowns of England and Scotland.

The news was brought post haste to the Court at Greenwich, where the Queen broke off her revelry to utter in tears that significantly poignant complaint:

"The Queen of Scots is lighter of a fair boy, and I am but a barren stock!"

Presently she recovered her composure and promised, as a special favour to her dear sister, to send Sir William Cecil to represent her at the christening.

"I trust I shall not be troubled," was Cecil's comment to a friend.

He was not. Instead, he resumed his "practising." He first accused the Scottish Queen of harbouring malcontents from England and sharing in their treasonable conspiracies. Then, to make perfectly sure she was doing so, he authorized a certain Rokesby, who had influential friends in the north, to worm his way into Mary's confidence—"to the contentation," as he expressed it, "of the Queen's Majesty." Rokesby successfully accomplished his mission and wrote to Cecil a very interesting account of Mary's hopes and ambitions in England. In particular, he reported:

"She trusted to find many friends in England, when time did serve, especially among those of the old religion, which she meant to restore, and thereby win the hearts of the common people."

Mary had no doubt where to find the staunchest supporters of the old order; but in the sixteenth century a cause was no stronger for being popular, and to be solicitous for the "hearts of the common people" was hardly practical politics.

So far the device of employing Rokesby as *agent provocateur*

"PRACTISING"

was working well: even Randolph himself was taken in. But then there occurred one of those provoking mischances, which are always possible in "practising" of this nature, but which rarely happened to Cecil. Henry Killigrew, Cecil's envoy, had duly complained as he had been instructed "of certain Things, viz., of Shan Oneyle's practisyng with hir, and hir Allowance of him; of Christopher Rokesby's being ther . . ." And what must Mary do but promptly arrest Rokesby, search his papers and find among them, of course, Cecil's own instructions about "the contentation of the Queen's Majesty"! It was most unfortunate. And Mary had always been his "*bien bonne amye*"!

§ 2.

The birth of an heir to Mary threw again into prominence the question of Elizabeth's marriage or of her successor. Each party at Court had a candidate for her hand. A Lutheran, the Duke of Württemberg, had been suggested: wry-necked, as Mundt admitted, but in that respect no worse than the great Alexander; but it was the Archduke Charles that Cecil still affected to recommend. In this he was followed with his own insincerity by Bacon, and in good faith by Norfolk, Sussex and the conservatives. Against them were ranged the more single-minded Protestants: Pembroke, Throgmorton, the Puritan Knollys and ostensibly Leicester. But Leicester was really working for the succession of Mary, "or Cecil," as he assured Elizabeth, "would undo all." Why he would "undo all" was because he and the whole revolutionary party were still solidly for the succession of Lady Catharine. Whatever Cecil might pretend, Arundel was probably right when he told de Silva that the Secretary was really opposed to the Queen's marrying at all.

"He was ambitious and fond of ruling, and liked everything to pass through his hands. If the Queen had a husband he would have to obey him."

Probably, also, Cecil already suspected the truth: that

the Queen was incapable of marriage. Add to this her constant ailing and the extreme likelihood of his own out-living her, and it at once becomes plain why he was so deeply concerned for the succession.

The claims of Catharine had not been allowed to pass forgotten. On the discovery of her secret marriage to the Earl of Hertford, Elizabeth in the first flush of her anger had insisted on Parker's nullifying the contract. The Archbishop, obedient to his spiritual Governess, had complied. No one interested in the matter had treated very seriously the pronouncement of the established Church, but it was as well to have the matter rectified if possible. Shortly, therefore, after the prorogation of the previous parliament a book had appeared by the Puritan lawyer Hales, vehemently defending the validity of the marriage. The Queen insisted on his being charged with "presumptuously and contemptuously" discussing the case; and Cecil to his disgust had to waste more time than he could afford in a minute examination of the affair. Moreover it was an embarrassing task, for he himself was in sympathy with the thesis and had indirectly instigated its publication. Hales himself had to serve six months in the Fleet for his pains, and Bacon (whose share in it could not be hidden) was severely reprimanded. Others, notably Cecil, were considered to be too powerful to be touched: besides, it was Cecil who had been conducting the inquiry!

But by the summer of 1566, when Mary's son was born, this was a thing of the past. When Parliament met again in the following October, it was thought fitting to force the Queen's hand by another deputation of both Houses to urge a definitive ruling in the matter of the succession. Though Cecil himself was a member of the Commons deputation, the project succeeded no better than before and only extorted from the Queen a still more abusive snubbing.

This was the second session of the Parliament that had first met three years earlier during the war with France. Like its predecessor, it failed in its main objective; not from any

lack of good will to the principles of the revolution, but owing to the obstinate resistance of the Queen, who (as Cecil complained) was “less zealous than she should be.”

All the same, no session could be allowed to pass without some further step, however slight, towards strengthening the change in religion.

During the six years it had been established the cause had not made the progress that Cecil could have wished. Gradually the law was being applied, but there were difficulties in the way of its enforcement. It had been more than three years before Rome had definitely pronounced against attendance at the new State services, and for some time longer it was common for Catholics in the country to render contemptuous outward conformity at their parish churches and afterwards in private houses hear Mass. Similarly, in these early years, there were many priests who performed what was required of them by the government and said their Mass as well. As time went on a more rigid cleavage resulted in a corresponding weakening of the establishment. As the law was more stringently enforced it became increasingly difficult to find ministers for the empty cures. Such of the livings as remained occupied were mostly in unworthy hands. Cecil writes to Parker (of Suffolk and Essex): “Surely here be many slender ministers, and such nakedness of religion, as it overthroweth my credit.” *His* credit, it will be noticed: so closely was his own reputation bound up with that of his Establishment! Constantly he was having occasion “to stay the Queen’s Majesty for daily offence conceived against the clergy, by reason of the undiscreeit behaviour of the Readers and Ministers.” And there was a similar difficulty with the bishops. “The Bishop of Norwich,” for instance, “is blamed even of the best sort for his remissness in ordering his clergy; he winketh at Schismatics and Anabaptists, as I am informed.” Indeed, of the original batch of State bishops, only Parker himself was above reproach; the rest were time-servers, sometimes even of doubtful honesty, or intractable ex-

tremists, such as Grindall of London, who unless constantly restrained would have brought down the flimsy edifice like a pack of cards about their own ears.

The universities were still "backward," even Cambridge, the intellectual cradle of the English Reformation. At Oxford, naturally, matters were far worse. In November, 1561, the students were in open revolt. "The whole place," reported the mayor, "was of the same opinion, and there were not three houses in it that were not filled with papists." The Council, we are told, "were far from pleased, and told the mayor to take care not to say such things elsewhere."

Like the universities, the learned professions of the law and medicine were teeming with papists. The lawyers especially had been hampering the work of reformation at every turn. It was they who were constantly making difficulties about the legal status of the establishment, and it was they who by upholding Bonner had saved the popish bishops just when Cecil thought to have compassed their extinction. Fortunately they were more easily dealt with than the doctors, and by the new penal act of the last session Cecil had dealt them a blow which ultimately would prove fatal.

The slow progress accomplished in five years was abundantly revealed by the returns sent in by the bishops in reply to Cecil's inquiries in 1564. To take instances at random:

Worcester complains of the numbers of popish priests and others who have forsaken the ministry and yet live in corners and are kept in gentlemen's houses, "where they marvailouslie pervert the simple and blaspheme the truth." They should be restrained of their liberty and made to take the oath of Supremacy.

Ely makes a similar recommendation, and would also have a proclamation made "to repress the bold talke and braggs of the adversaries of good religion." The chief constables of every hundred—this was nearly everywhere the trouble—were for the most part "fawtors of naughtie

religion." They should be removed and others appointed who would execute the laws.

Hereford finds that the chief trouble he experiences is in his own cathedral, where "all the canons resedensaries ar but dissemblers and rancke papistes." Being subject not to the bishop or dean but only to the Queen, they utterly disregard her injunctions, neither preach, read homilies, nor minister Holy Communion, nor do any other thing to commend, beautify or set forward this religion, but mutter against it and receive and maintain the enemies thereof.

Norwich, as might be expected, is more reassuring. The Justices of the Peace are very well affected, with one or two exceptions; but

Coventry and Lichfield, rather surprisingly, reports that the greatest disorders in his diocese are in the great towns corporate.

Winchester declares that all who bear authority in the city, except one or two, "are addicte to the olde superstition and earnest fautors thereof."

Carlisle—"to speak plainly"—reports that the nobleman's tenants in this county dare not be known to favour that way—*i.e.* the new religion—for fear of losing their farms. As for the justices of the peace, those few who make a good show of religion in giving their charge, in all other their talks and doings *show themselves not favourable to any manner or cause of religion*, "which the people moche marke and talke of."

Gloucester says much unquietness and discredit is caused to her Majesty's godly and honourable proceedings by some who have little or no regard to the established order of ecclesiastical policy. "Ther is also a preacher, a man of great zeale and competent learninge, whom many of the county follow from place to place and receave the communion at his hands far from their own parisshees." What is still more interesting, he hears also by men of good credit that he is "too popular in his sayings."

The above reports must be fairly representative of the general condition of the country, and considering their source they are not likely to have been over pessimistic. They deserve careful consideration because they illustrate convincingly the gigantic task that Cecil had set himself in thrusting the revolutionary settlement upon a mainly hostile nation. Moreover, the presence of these returns among his papers is characteristic of the responsibility he felt for the Church of his own begetting. It was not the model upon which his friends, the Puritans, would have built it; to the rest of the nation it was odious. But it was the form of worship which Cecil himself conceived would stand the best chance of being ultimately accepted by the nation. The extraordinary degree of his success is the measure of his greatness; but in these early days, when the experiment was but five years old, the future looked extremely doubtful.

It was characteristic of the new State Church that it had so far no definitive standard of doctrine; nor did its Governess seem anxious to provide one. Its first Convocation, meeting simultaneously with the Parliament of 1563, had revived the "Articles" of the Church of Edward VI, reducing them from 42 to 39, and by royal command (for diplomatic reasons) omitting the eucharistically controversial 29th. But they remained in Latin; and, having no legal authorization, were without any practical value. It was hoped that this second session of the Parliament (in the autumn of 1566) would give to the Articles the statutory authority without which they were nothing. To this end Cecil had caused to be drafted what was modestly entitled *The bill with a little book printed 1562¹ for the sound Christian religion*. It passed the Commons as a matter of course; but, on its first reading in the Lords, Elizabeth insisted on its withdrawal. The bishops appealed to her in vain. She had never had much of an opinion of her Establishment; at best, her sentiments were those of Touchstone—"an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own": at any rate she would not be

¹ *I.e.* by modern reckoning, during the early months of 1563.

bound to doctrines . she herself considered worse than doubtful.

Cecil did not press the point—immediately: he could afford to wait.

But one thing he did insist upon. At least the legality of the episcopate should be regularized. An act establishing their position passed both Houses; yet even so the unprogressive Lords insisted on a clause depriving them of their power to take action in matters involving life or property. Thus, in spite of Cecil, the popish bishops were once more saved from the vengeance of their enemies.

The Queen dismissed this second session with an answer to its petition less ambiguous than that which she had given to the first. Where she had always professed plainness, she marvelled at “so much dissimulation.” Did they think she was unmindful of their surety by succession? No, she warranted them. Her meaning had been but to stay them before they fell into the ditch. Therefore, whether she lived to see the like assembly or no, or whoever it might be, let them beware how they proved their Prince’s patience, as they had now done hers.

§ 3.

From Cecil’s point of view the Parliament of 1566 had not been altogether a success. It represented a drawn battle between his own policy and the Queen’s—if the Queen can be allowed to have had any policy at all. As such, it was a merely irrelevant interruption in what was his main business during this period, the watching of events in Scotland and the judicious “practising” therewith.

Parliament had been dissolved on January 2 of the new year. The dramatic rapidity with which matters developed in Scotland during the succeeding months is summarised with precision in one of Cecil’s memoranda:

10 Febru.—Y^e K. of Scottes killed.

5 April.—a Contract for mariage signed by y^e Q. of Scottes.

HER MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE

- 12 April.—Bothwell purged by Assise.
- 17 April.—Erle Murray cam to Westm.
- 19 April.—a band sealed by y^e L. of Scotland, a warrant signed y^e same day.
- 24 April.—Bothwell toke y^e Queene.
- 7^o Maii.—Devorce begon; ended 8^o Maii.
- 15 Maii.—The Q. Marr. to Bothwell.
- 15 Junii.—The Q. was taken by hir Nobilite.

These nine incidents succinctly state the facts which historians of the rival parties have ever since been attempting to render less mysterious. An apparent reconciliation had taken place between Darnley and the Queen, but there is reason to suppose she had never forgiven him the part he had taken in the murder of Rizzio. Certainly the confederate lords—the gang who had actually perpetrated the deed—had never forgiven him his betrayal of them to the Queen. This Mary knew, and presumably was content to let matters take their course. A dark conspiracy culminated in Darnley's death at the blowing up of the house at Kirk-o'-Field. The actual contriver of the deed was Bothwell, an enterprising Protestant noble, intent (like all the rest) on playing for his personal ends. That Secretary Maitland was as deeply implicated as Morton (or even Bothwell) is only a degree less certain. Murray himself was in sympathy, but cautiously kept himself in the background. The Queen's own complicity in the affair is very much less capable of proof than is that of her subsequent accusers; but she was already half suspect in the eyes of her friends, when her marriage to Bothwell changed fearful suspicion to something like horrified certainty.

That she married him under compulsion is made only more probable by her public declaration that she acted of her own free will; but the fact that she married him at all, and by a Protestant form that implied religious apostacy, alienated from her at once the sympathy of those Catholic powers on which she had hitherto relied. And the marriage

"PRACTISING"

was as fatal to Bothwell. Till now the gang had stood together: it was this that had made any inquiry into the murder impossible for Mary, if she had wished it. Elizabeth, acting on her own initiative, had written to her personally, urging the supreme importance of bringing the culprits to justice; but Maitland had seen to it that the letter should not be delivered. When the Court sat, he, Morton and Bothwell had been there with their retainers to force an acquittal. Thus Bothwell had been "purged by Assise" (as Cecil observes); and the Scottish Parliament, in ratifying the verdict, restored to Bothwell, Morton, Maitland and the rest, all those Crown lands they had filched in the past, but which Mary, at Darnley's instigation, had revoked. Now this touching unanimity on the part of the gang was roughly terminated by Bothwell's marriage. Darnley, as Mary's husband, had been unbearable, but at least he had been of royal blood: Bothwell was just one of themselves, an upstart. That he should presume, on the strength of his services with the gunpowder, to lord it over his fellows, as King, was something altogether fantastic and unthinkable. Outraged and indignant, with Morton at the head of them, they confronted Bothwell and his Queen in arms at Carberry Hill. Bothwell disappeared, and the Queen (as Cecil notes) was "taken by hir nobilite." Having been imprisoned on Loch Leven, she was compelled by threats of death to sign a deed of abdication; Murray, her half-brother, was established as Regent, and that the heavenly sanction of royalty might also be his, Mary's baby son was crowned as James VI.

§ 4.

Cecil might well feel satisfied. Mary, chief enemy to his aims in England as well as in Scotland, was utterly ruined: deposed, morally discredited and in prison. In her place his own friends—Murray and the gang, with the discreet and subtle Maitland—were established in complete control, bound to maintain the revolutionary settlement and dependent ultimately on the English government.

The only disturbing factor was his own mistress. Elizabeth had been watching these recent events across the border with feelings of alarm and apprehension. Rebellion in any circumstances was unpardonable; but that a crowned and anointed sovereign should be violently seized, imprisoned and forced to abdicate was a phenomenon in her eyes, nothing short of cataclysmic; foreboding, surely, the final consummation of the world. Her indignation was frantic. So much so that at no period in his career had Cecil such difficulty in frustrating her wishes and neutralizing her commands. Throgmorton, Cecil's old ambassador in France, was sent by her to the Scottish Lords to insist on their sovereign's release, and to Mary with promises of assistance and protection. But Cecil countermanded the order and Throgmorton knew whom to obey. When an envoy from the court of France came to urge on Elizabeth joint action for the Scottish Queen's release, Cecil had to rack his brains for a plausible excuse for preventing it: "We find it credible," he wrote, "that it were the next way to make an end of her, and for that cause her Majesty is loth to take that way." But when her wrathful Majesty insisted on writing herself to the Scottish Lords, to complain of their "misdoings"—then there was only one thing left to be done! One of the most authentic marks of greatness is an artistic economy, never resorting to extremities when milder methods will serve. Similarly, however, your truly great man will recognize instantly when no measures will be adequate but the most drastic. As a general rule, for instance, forgery is but a coarse expedient: therefore Cecil very rarely had recourse to it. But whereas lesser men will forge either too often or never, Cecil was one of those rare geniuses who seem to perceive as by instinct when forgery is necessary and unavoidable. And this occasion was one. It was imperative to give every official encouragement to his friends in Scotland: for the Queen, at this juncture, bluntly to stigmatize "their misdoings" was an act of tactlessness that might ruin all. But what could be simpler than to make some very slight

verbal alteration? Only one word, he decided, would be necessary. Taking a pen, he carefully erased the word "their"—it was not *their* misdeeds that her Majesty was blaming!—and in its place wrote "her." That was all: and having sealed the letter he faithfully dispatched it.

Fortunately, whatever Elizabeth might choose to write, Cecil and Murray understood each other pretty well. "Although," wrote the latter ironically, "the Queen's Majesty, your mistress, outwardly seem not altogether to allow the present state here, yet doubt I not but her Highness in heart likes it well enough." While such amicable relations subsisted between the two personages who really mattered, it was of little importance whether her Highness liked or disliked.

However, Elizabeth's professions of sympathy and friendship, if entirely ineffective, were sincere. And Mary trusted to them. Escaping from Loch Leven in May of the following year, and being swiftly routed by her enemies at Langside, she rode for her life to the Solway—and, crossing it, set foot in England.

V

THE DEVICE OF THE CASKET

DURING the ten months of her imprisonment in Scotland, a reaction had taken place in the world's opinion of Mary. From a murderous adulteress she had slowly been transformed into the image of a beautiful and distressed Queen, ensnared by a parcel of canting and inhuman criminals. And to the opponents of the revolution she was more. In spite of what had seemed a temporary apostasy, it was now abundantly clear that the real explanation of her troubles lay in the bitter hatred of the fanatics and self-seeking nobles for a sovereign who had presumed to oppose their religious changes and check their orgy of spoliation. So, at any rate, thought the Catholic North of England, where from every county the gentry flocked to Carlisle to pay her devoted homage.

As for Elizabeth, left to herself she would eagerly have redeemed her promises and would at least have attempted to restore her "dear sister." And in this she was actuated by motives of no mere quixotic generosity: that was not her nature. Recently the revolutionary movement had broken out afresh, and in a form more alarming than ever. In France, the Huguenots had made another attempt on the person of the King, and only with difficulty had they been defeated in the field: in the Netherlands, the long-expected revolt against King Philip had opened with violent atrocities, and beneath the patriotic surface could easily be detected the driving force of the world-wide religious revolution. France, the Netherlands—and now Scotland! Clearly if this sort of thing were to continue, no crowned

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head in Europe would be safe. It might suit Cecil well enough; but to Elizabeth, what he chose to call the "fawtors of true religion" were but rascally and impious rebels—and ungrateful, to boot. How had Condé repaid her, when she had been weakly induced to aid him? Never again would she succour rebellion against Majesty: as for countenancing it so near home as Scotland, such a course would not only proclaim her a traitor to her order, but (what was even worse) establish a precedent for her subjects in England.

Both policy, therefore, and her natural feelings, prompted her to restore her sister of Scotland. But—alas for poor Elizabeth—she was not her own mistress: there was Cecil to be considered. It was impossible, in a crisis, to determine anything without him. She might regret, at times even loathe, the dangerous position in which he had placed her; but the idea of abandoning it, alone, was out of the question: at the thought of it her will grew paralysed. Leicester, her most intimate confidant, was politically a fool: it would be madness to trust to *him*. What else, therefore, could she do but, being embarked with Cecil—and thank Heaven he could scarcely float without her!—to rely on him to bring her through?

Ultimately, therefore, whatever she might think to resolve herself, it would be Cecil's advice she would have to follow. And his view of the situation was very different from her own. The downfall of Mary had meant the triumph of the Cause in Scotland; moreover Murray and his gang were his own good friends, and their supremacy across the border was the best guarantee of the supremacy of himself (and all he represented) in England.

What then would he advise? For the moment—nothing definite. He would merely draw up one of his careful reviews of the general situation: showing, on the one hand, how that Mary's restoration to Scotland would revive there the influence of the French—a disastrous undoing of all the recent good work; on the other, how that her crossing the

Channel would invite France or Spain to substitute her for Elizabeth on the English throne.

Such an exposition of the difficulties, as he had rightly calculated, could not but alarm her Majesty and give her pause. In the meantime, since her Majesty must needs urge on Murray a cessation of hostilities against Mary's faction in the Lowlands, he hastily warned the Regent to make all haste before her letter arrived. That done he had the Scottish Queen for security moved from Carlisle further south to Bolton; then, Elizabeth having been properly impressed by his dispassionate statement of the case, he was ready to take his second step.

Before her Majesty could determine on any course of action on behalf of her dear sister she would first have to satisfy herself of the rights and wrongs of the case. Not that she was proposing to exercise that invidious old English claim of suzerainty over the Scots—far from it. Nor did she ask the Queen of Scots to submit herself to a trial: that would be absurd. On the other hand it would surely be legitimate—would it not?—to hold a court of inquiry, merely for her own political satisfaction, into the action of the Scottish Lords in taking arms against their sovereign. Mary agreed that it would; and the Lords themselves having been privately assured that it would certainly do *them* no harm, a conference was duly summoned and met in October at York.

The gang was there in force: the Regent Murray himself, Maitland, the Secretary and the trusty Morton. Mary was represented by Leslie (the Bishop of Ross) and Lord Herries; the English government—no, not by Cecil at present: that would have looked too obvious—by Norfolk and Sussex (Protestants both, but political Conservatives) and by the real expert on Scottish affairs, Sir Ralph Sadler, one who had served for years as ambassador in what he called "that beastly nation." Called upon to explain their conduct against their Queen, the gang replied as arranged with a counter charge concerning the Queen's complicity in her husband's murder.

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The proofs were in their possession: a casket belonging to Mary had been left behind by Bothwell, and in this casket—so it was alleged—had been discovered certain documents in Mary's handwriting: two contracts of marriage, some letters to Bothwell and some love sonnets, also presumed to be addressed to him; these documents, it was contended, proved conclusively that Bothwell had been the Queen's lover and that she had concocted with him the plot for her husband's murder. A copy of the originals (translated from the French) was submitted to the English representatives at York, and an abstract of their contents to the commissioners of the Scottish Queen. Norfolk and his colleagues were duly impressed: Mary indignantly denied having ever written anything of the sort and demanded to see the originals.

"If any such writings be," she wrote, "they are false and feigned, forged and invented by themselves."

But the originals were not forthcoming.

What we know of their history is this. The casket was alleged to have been discovered on June 20, 1567. On July 12 the French envoy de Croc, on his way from Scotland to France, mentioned the existence of such incriminating letters to de Silva in London and seems to have had copies of them in his possession. At the end of the same month de Silva also saw Murray himself in London, who assured him he had actually seen the evidence and described the contents of one of the letters. This, on the face of it, narrowly restricts the period during which the forgery (if any) was accomplished. Against this, why if the letters were genuine were they never shown to Mary herself, and why after the trial were they allowed mysteriously to disappear? It is inconceivable that Cecil, with conclusive evidence in his hands, should have so misconducted the case as to make it appear possible that the evidence was forged. Nor is it more credible that any enterprise of Maitland's could have been conducted wholly honourably: in other words. if he had anything in Mary's writing he

could usefully adapt, it would be a contradiction of all we know of him to suppose that out of mere quixotic chivalry he would have refrained from tampering.

But Maitland was in a delicate position. Nervous about his own palpable guilt in the very crime he was attributing to Mary, and still clinging to his scheme for the union of the kingdoms by Mary's succession to the throne of England, he was half inclined to drop the charges altogether and work for Mary's restoration. In these circumstances he came to urge a plan that had already been suggested in a very different quarter—that of Mary's marriage to Norfolk, then actually the president of the court of inquiry. On no other terms, as he pointed out to Mary's commissioners, would Elizabeth be induced to restore her to her throne: at the same time he assured Norfolk that there was no need to feel alarmed at the supposedly incriminating letters, for he, Maitland, knew for a fact she was innocent.

The scheme had obvious advantages. As a staunch Protestant, Norfolk would be well received by the Scottish Protestants; and, as a foreign consort of indifferent ability, he would offer no hindrance to the ambitions of the gang. Even Murray, who would be most immediately affected, was bound to admit there was much to recommend the idea; for if Elizabeth refused to support him, Mary would obviously be restored. It was therefore as well to provide for emergencies.

But there was a fatal obstacle to the scheme: it was one that would never suit Cecil. Though Norfolk was a convinced and professing Protestant, politically he was a Conservative and socially he stood at the head of the older nobility who regarded Cecil and his friends as upstarts. Such a marriage would immediately ally to Mary the vast majority of the nation who were opposed to Cecil's policy; moreover the restoration of Mary would be accompanied by the prospect of her succession in England.

And Cecil was already growing suspicious of Norfolk. If Maitland and the Duke were in league, the commission

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had better be dissolved. Dissolved accordingly it was, and a fresh commission was named to sit at Westminster. This time, to the original members were added Leicester and Arundel, Cecil himself and his two devoted followers, Bacon and Knollys. Before a special committee of peers what purported to be the originals of the letters were at last produced. The commissioners' opinion on them appears to have been divided; but at any rate the originals existed, they had actually been seen! Mary, hearing her accusers had been admitted to a private audience with the Queen, demanded the right to appear herself in person before her and the whole assembled Court, publicly to rebut the charges which she claimed to be false. That, of course, was out of the question: Cecil had several plausible arguments why such a request "to come into the presence of her Mtie. cannot be agreed to." The truth was that the inquiry had already served its purpose. Elizabeth, now completely docile, informed Knollys what "is thought of all devices the best for us." If Mary would resign the crown of Scotland to her infant son *and let him be educated in England* (as a Protestant), *he* should succeed to the throne of England also. Otherwise the evidence would be published of his mother's guilt.

But what, objected Mary, if her son were to die? In the circumstances she can be excused for being suspicious. Was there not a pact between her half-brother Murray and Cecil? She had heard there was. It had been said that, in the event of James's death, Murray should succeed in Scotland. And in England? Who more suitable to Cecil and his friends than Hertford—especially if he were to marry Cecil's daughter.¹

At the beginning of the new year, Mary finally refused the offer.

So ended the Device of the Casket, and of the commission of inquiry thereon. It was a sham inquiry, just as the Westminster Debate of ten years' before had been a sham:

¹ His wife, Catharine Grey, had died a few months before.

and it was no less successful. "I think," as Elizabeth had told the Spanish ambassador, "that her acquittal should be so arranged that it should be left in doubt." And for the best of reasons. "It was not meant," wrote Cecil, "if the Queen of Scots should be found guilty of the murder to restore her to Scotland." Nor, in the other event, had her restoration been intended. To restore her at all would have been fatal to Cecil's designs. To acquit her, without restoring her, would have savoured of injustice: to find her guilty there was neither evidence nor authority. Obviously, therefore, the matter "should be left in doubt." The full case against her might be made public: she would be amply discredited by the insinuation of guilt: and there, for the present, the matter might be allowed to rest. Certainly, "of all devices the best for Us!"

VI

THE AFFAIR OF THE SAFE-CONDUCT

§ 1.

WHILE the court of inquiry was still sitting at Westminster there was achieved by Cecil, in quite another department, a stroke of policy which for sheer daring and brilliance is equal to any in his career. Moreover it was an achievement so pivotal, both in his public policy and his own private fortunes, that it deserves to be described, in all its perfection, separately.

The occasion arose out of a happy conjunction of events connected with (1) the difficult situation of the Spanish government in the Low Countries, and (2) the great development, in recent years, of piracy (and its side-lines) as a remunerative career or profession.

For many years the native population of the Netherlands had been devotedly attached to its rulers of the House of Burgundy; and that devotion had continued when under the Emperor Charles V that family became the ruling dynasty in Spain. But Charles's son, Philip II of Spain, with the passion for centralization so typical of the age, had begun to effect drastic reforms both in Church and State, which clashed violently with vested interests in the Netherlands, as well as with the aspirations of Flemish patriotism. Also, from the first, he had taken strenuous action against the spreading of the religious revolution in those districts. Numerically the revolutionaries in the Netherlands were hardly stronger in relation to the total population than they were in England or France; but they had the advantage of being able to ally to themselves, especially at the beginning, the outraged

patriotism of many of their Catholic fellow-subjects—notably, among others, the Prince of Orange and the Counts Egmont and Hoorne. William of Orange's motives—though he was personally much indebted to the King of Spain—were compounded of patriotism and private ambition. While still professing Catholicism he had done all he could to hamper Philip's reforms, and had not hesitated to enlist in his cause the support of the revolutionary riff-raff. This latter, however, had quickly grown out of hand, and the result was that orgy of torturing, murder and sacrilege which had raised such hopes in the English government of the approaching triumph of the Church of Christ.

For Cecil had been closely watching the course of events in the Low Countries. Gresham, his agent on the spot, had been sending him reports as reliable as they were reassuring, and he had let it be known that the rebels in the Netherlands, as in France, could count on the sympathy of England. For apart altogether from the desirability of aiding the world revolution, the continued factiousness of the Church of Christ in France and in the Netherlands would effectually checkmate any interference by those governments with the established revolution in England.

But then had come a check. In the summer of 1567, just as things were going so well in Scotland, Duke Ferdinand of Alva had come to Brussels with a body of disciplined Spanish troops to reduce the country to submission. The fury of the revolutionary mob had already died down, but Philip had determined that such outrages should never recur. Consequently Alva, an able general and rigid martinet, had set himself, with cold frightfulness, to break the revolution utterly, hunting down all who had been concerned in the recent riotings, murders and torturings, and by martial law sentencing them to death by thousands. And Alva was no respecter of persons. Egmont and Hoorne, though not directly concerned in the popular rioting, were sentenced by the military tribunal for their responsibility in inciting to revolt. A month later (in July 1568) Orange's brother,

Louis of Nassau, at the head of an army of Protestant Germans and Frenchmen, was decisively crushed by Alva at the battle of Jemmingen.

The severity of Alva's administration and his victory in the field at Jemmingen seemed to threaten the very continuance of the revolution in the Netherlands. But the permanence of his achievement depended wholly on the discipline of his troops. And his troops required to be paid. Through a firm of Italian bankers, Philip dispatched in November, by sea, a sum of 450,000 ducats to be delivered to Alva for his troops. But the seas, and especially the Channel, were infested by pirates. Many Huguenot and Flemish outlaws were subsisting for a livelihood on robbery and murder at sea, while the buccaneers from England, having the advantage of the secret connivance of their government, were bolder than all the rest. In these circumstances the Spanish government thought it advisable to unload the treasure at Plymouth and Southampton, and convey it thence by land to Dover for reshipment to Alva in the Netherlands. A courteous request was therefore submitted by the Spanish ambassador in London (de Silva had by this time been superseded by the Catalan, Don Guerau d'Espes) that a safe-conduct should be granted for the conveyance of the treasure across England. Confidence was still reposed in the honour of the Queen of England, and Elizabeth acceded to the request as a matter of course.

Then Cecil intervened.

For exactly ten years—from the time, that is, of his assuming supreme control with the accession of Elizabeth—Cecil had been relying on Spain and Spanish jealousy of France to protect Elizabeth (and himself) from any hostile interference by the French. But in the course of these ten years the support of Spain had for various reasons been gradually declining in importance: the removal of the French out of Scotland, the fall from influence of Mary's relatives the Guises, the religious troubles in France—all these things had been tending to make reliance on Spain less necessary.

At the same time political considerations were ceasing to obscure the all-important religious issue: Spain was becoming more apparently the champion of the counter-revolution in Europe, and confronting her was England, the only government of any standing that had adopted the religious change and everywhere supported the cause of the great revolution.

Logically, therefore, there was an increasing tension in the relations between the two governments, and it had been accentuated, just recently, when Philip had expelled the English representative at Madrid. Again Cecil had been unfortunate in selecting for such a post Dr. Man, a palpable cad. In a fit of religious excitement Dr. Man had publicly described the reigning Pontiff as that "canting little monk." King Philip had sent him packing, and Cecil was highly annoyed. It was not often that he allowed himself to appear ruffled; but on this occasion de Silva, when he called at Cecil House, found the Secretary in a towering passion.

§ 2.

An issue between the two nations of even more immediate urgency was the patent encouragement that the English government was offering to piracy. The profession of robbery at sea had found many recruits during the previous reign among more or less outlawed Protestants, and since Elizabeth's accession it had achieved a recognition that was almost honourable. The most notable buccaneers, many of them gentlemen by birth and nominally "fawters of true religion," having little to fear from the new government, continued to prey at will on vessels of whatever nationality they encountered. Moreover, side by side with regular piracy, a profitable side-line had recently been explored. The famous John Hawkins, a sailor of Devon sprung from a family of sailors, being also endowed with business acumen and enterprise, had discovered a hitherto untapped vein of profit in the trafficking of negro slaves with the Spanish

settlers in the Indies. The Spanish government, possessed as usual by a superstitious reverence for the traditional morality of Catholicism, had recently prohibited its own subjects from dealing in slaves; and, since it claimed for the mother-country a monopoly of trade with its colonies, it was threatening to bring this supposed evil to an end. The Spanish government's restrictions were the cause of much chafing among the colonists, who needed black labour for the mines; and some of them had suggested to Hawkins that large profits might be expected from illicit dealings in the business. No second hint had been needed by a man of Hawkins's pushfulness and resource. Raising the necessary capital, he embarked for the Guinea coast, bought (or preferably kidnapped) his negroes, and having conveyed them, batted down in his holds, across the Atlantic, he disposed of them for a fortune to the clamouring Spanish colonists.

Cecil had felt none too comfortable about this "boot-legging" in slaves. Not, to do him justice, that he had any foolish scruples about the moral aspect of the affair; but the trade was manifestly a breach of English treaty obligations, and at present he was particularly anxious to avoid any open clash with the government of Spain. Unfortunately, there were others at Court less far-seeing—Leicester, for instance, and even the Queen herself—who had been ready and anxious to take shares in the profits of a second voyage. The second voyage was therefore undertaken, and completed to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. Why not a third? This time the Queen would so far commit herself as to lend for the enterprise one of her own ships, appropriately named the *Jesus*. In October, 1567, Hawkins had set forth again; but, this time, not before he had surrendered to the cautious Cecil a bond for fifty pounds—and what was that?—undertaking not to trade with any of the King of Spain's dominions. One never knew, thought Cecil: it might be a useful document to have in one's possession.

§ 3.

Over a year had elapsed, and nothing had been heard of the brave Hawkins and his human cargoes. Meanwhile Cecil had been able to deny most fervently that the Queen had any part in countenancing the illicit slave-traffic, or the straightforward piracy that was rampant nearer home. The truth was that the government, even if it had so desired, was unable to do anything to prevent it. Never had the Royal Navy been so utterly powerless within actual sight of the English coast. But it was well known—and this added greatly to the contempt which was felt abroad for the English revolutionary government—that, of all civilized States, England was the only one that patently connived at this brigandry, and made no attempt to suppress it even with such feeble strength as it possessed.

And then, early in December, 1568, there at last arrived news of the missing expedition. It was contained in a letter to Cecil from William Hawkins, the adventurer's elder brother, announcing a rumour that the expedition had failed, and that John Hawkins himself with a number of his men had been put to the sword by the Spaniards. The writer therefore suggested that official inquiries should be made and that by way of compensation the government should seize the treasure of King Philip on its way through England.

Happily, the worst of the report was almost instantly disproved by the arrival at Plymouth of young Francis Drake, a kinsman of the Hawkins's, who had himself accompanied the expedition. But he had a melancholy story to unfold. All had gone well up to a point, and the cargoes had been successfully disposed of; but then a storm had forced back the flotilla to the port of San Juan de Ulloa, the modern Vera Cruz. "Almighty God," as Hawkins had piously acknowledged, "never suffereth his elect to perish"; but, all the same, on this occasion He was less considerate of His elect than usual, for in the harbour of San Juan

they were basely trapped by the Spaniards and—for all the world as if they were a set of malefactors—violently set upon. The *Jesus* had to be abandoned, some hundred of the crews were taken prisoners and—worst of all!—the profits of the venture were utterly lost.

A month later Hawkins himself reached England in the only other surviving ship; but Cecil had not waited for this, nor even for the formality of demanding an official explanation. William Hawkins's hint had been enough. To act on it, indeed, had been a gamble. Barefaced robbery on such a scale as this was an outrage which no State could possibly tolerate from another. In normal circumstances it would have meant war. But—and this was the point!—the circumstances were not normal. Only the quiescence of the Netherlands would permit of Spain's retaliating, and the quiescence of the Netherlands depended on the discipline of Alva's garrison. Cecil knew precisely the position of affairs in the Netherlands: he also knew his Philip. The very provocation, he decided, would itself make retaliation impossible. And having calculated thus, he acted. The safe-conduct, already granted by the Queen, was countermanded and the whole of the treasure—as “most fytt for Hyr Matie”—was safely lodged in the Tower.

Any excuse would do: that the money was travelling at the banker's risk and the Queen had need of a loan herself; alternatively, that it was merely being held to guard it from pirates! It really mattered little what was said: the money was in the Tower—that was the main thing. Besides, it had been intended for use against the sacred cause of the revolution: could robbery in such circumstances be anything but the most pious of frauds?

And Philip, as Cecil had calculated, dared not appeal to arms.

§ 4.

The consequences proved more far-reaching than even Cecil could have estimated. To make good the loss, Alva

was driven to levy an extraordinary tax—on sales! In so commercial a community as the Netherlands, nothing could have been more ill-chosen. The new tax became a grievance for the whole people, and (combined with the existing ill-feeling towards Spain) it was the main provocation of the revolt that established at last an independent and Protestant Holland.

But the same stroke which effected so much for the revolutionary cause in Europe was not without repercussions in England. Philip, unable for obvious reasons to attempt the arbitrament of war, could and did retaliate by instant commercial hostilities. All Spanish ports, including those of the Netherlands, were immediately shut to English trade, ships in Spanish harbours were seized and the property confiscated of all English nationals on Spanish soil. Cecil replied in kind; but though the financial balance was possibly in his favour, the commercial classes in England, especially merchants engaged in the all-important wool trade, found themselves suddenly on the brink of ruin.

Now, so far, it had been just these commercial classes which had been Cecil's most trustworthy supporters. For ten years he had worked hard in their interests, scheming the development of fresh industries, exploring new markets abroad for English goods. Next to "Religion," the country's commercial prosperity was always nearest his heart. And in return he had counted, and counted not in vain, on the political support of those who profited by his labours. But now, thanks to the closing of the most vital markets, he found his credit in this quarter suddenly and most violently shaken. Merchants, faced with immediate bankruptcy, turned on Cecil as the author of all their troubles. Already his devotion to an unpopular cause had earned him the loathing of the great majority of his countrymen. "He is so perplexed and unpopular," de Quadra had written, as early as 1561, "that I do not know how he will be able to stand if there are any disturbances." In addition to this "popular" resentment against him, the older nobility had

always hated him as an upstart; sympathizers with the Queen of Scots as the contriver-in-chief of her imprisonment—"she would have been released but for Cecil, her great enemy in the Council." Now, to this formidable coalition of enemies was added the whole of that rich and influential group of the nation in which (under the Queen) he had placed his greatest trust.

So it was that in January, 1569, the vague discontents of over ten years became focused at last on Cecil; and the forces of reaction, coalescing, were ready to overwhelm the one man on whom the fate of the revolution depended.

VII

THE YEARS OF CRISIS

§ I.

"THE case," wrote Cecil, "seemed so desperate as almost to take away all courage to seek a remedy." In the spring of 1569 this statement was no exaggeration. In ten years the discontent of the nation at his settlement of religion, so far from diminishing, "had grown bold." His enemies—and in every section of the community they were now the majority—were ready to unite for his overthrow: abroad, Spain was intriguing in their favour; independently of Spain, they had the moral support of Rome. The attack was now ready to be launched, and during this and the two succeeding years it broke, wave after wave, upon his seemingly flimsy defences: open revolt in the north, the spiritual fulminations of Rome, the armed menace of Spain, still more sinister conspiracies at home—one after another Cecil's adversaries resorted to all.

In the titanic struggle of these years he had three advantages in his favour:

(1) He could command (as can every *de facto* government) the ordinary resources of the State in arms, money and organization; and, what was more, the mystic divinity that surrounded sixteenth-century royalty.

(2) France, temporarily secure from internal troubles, could be relied upon, at the worst, to checkmate the ambitions of Spain.

(3) He possessed that unity of control, without which the most formidable of coalitions avail nothing.

The rallying-point for most of Cecil's enemies was the imprisoned Queen of Scots—for most, but not quite all. In the forces arrayed against Cecil there was plenty of conforming Protestantism, and to secure the maximum of support for any attempt to ruin Cecil some programme was necessary that promised toleration for the new religion. Hence the importance of the Protestant Duke of Norfolk, the acknowledged leader of the aristocratic opposition. If he were to marry the Scottish Queen, toleration for Protestants would be safeguarded and the interests of all factions of the opposition would be united. Nothing more direct could succeed: idle to accuse the Secretary "of being the cause of the Queen's detaining the Spanish money and by that of running a manifest risk of a war with Spain, which could not but be very prejudicial to trade": useless to think of placing him in the Tower "and then they would have matter enough against him." For the wily Secretary already had "advertisement" of these projects, and "wrote to the Queen of their purpose, who commanded that nothing should be done against him without her privy." Clearly the only scheme that could succeed was the more devious one of the marriage of Mary to Norfolk.

First mooted during the commission of inquiry at York, it was revived in the following June, this time by Norfolk himself, his father-in-law Arundel, Pembroke and Leicester. (But Leicester had to be careful—Cecil knew so much!) During a meeting of the Council, from which Cecil was absent, they carried a motion for restoring Mary to Scotland and admitting her right (in default of heirs of Elizabeth's body) to succeed to the English throne. Elizabeth, as they had calculated, approved.

But they had not breathed a word to her about Mary's marriage to Norfolk! To that, as Cecil knew, Elizabeth would never consent; and that is why he had done what he could to encourage the project. Realizing that it was the one condition which would certainly prevent the Queen's ever permitting them to release Mary, he had secretly

done all in his power to make that particular condition essential.

And Elizabeth, for her part, was not entirely ignorant of what they had in hand. She had heard rumours of it—Cecil had seen to it that she should; then Leicester had told her the rest. Before any drastic action was taken, Norfolk was given every opportunity to confess—the Queen herself conveyed to him the sinister warning “to beware on what pillow he laid his head”—but, obtuse as ever, he still failed to realize how completely he had been betrayed. In October he was peremptorily summoned to the Court. For a moment he hesitated. Should he obey or not? Actually, had he defied the government there and then, the whole of the north—almost the whole of the nation—would have been behind him, and the main objective of the whole conspiracy would have been achieved at a blow. It was an anxious moment for Cecil; but he knew enough of Norfolk to be able to count on bringing him to heel: the Duke, as his friends had to admit, was “too soft” for such an enterprise. Having tamely obeyed, he was instantly committed to the Tower: his accomplices, Arundel and Pembroke, were arrested also. The first round had ended in an easy victory for Cecil.

§ 2.

It was the beginning of October when Norfolk was imprisoned. At the news of his surrender the bolder of his allies in the north, the Catholic Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, resolved in disgust to wait no longer, but raise the country in revolt.

The Percys of Northumberland and the Nevilles of Westmorland were not only champions of the Catholic faith: they were the representatives also of that feudalistic conception of local independence, fading already, and now doomed to extinction by the new all-embracing, national State. Both families had suffered for their opposition to

the revolution: Northumberland's own father, Thomas Percy, had actually been executed for his connection with the Pilgrimage of Grace. Hence, for this alone, the Earls could command an extraordinary following among the people, while their ancient family traditions gave them what was almost the authority of princes throughout the whole of the Catholic north.

And the north was entirely Catholic: not only the peasantry, which was everywhere opposed to the religious innovations, but the gentry also, a class that elsewhere had been largely bribed into submission. Hence the difficulty of enforcing the new laws. Sadler, who was in a position to know, reported that there were "not in all this country ten gentlemen that do favour and allow of Her Majesty's proceedings in the cause of religion." The parishes were deserted of ministers, whose flocks were tended by refugee priests from Scotland and those who had been deprived as papists. No wonder that one of the unfortunate State bishops had to complain that "God's glorious Gospel could not take place."

The leaders of the rising were some time in agreeing as to their course of action. The release of Queen Mary was obviously their first objective; but they dared not avow it, lest Cecil should have her killed out of hand. From what we know of later events there is every reason to suppose that he would have done so. They therefore determined to confine themselves publicly to restoring religion and putting down the "divers new set-up nobles" who had misused the Queen's Majesty's own person and set up and maintained "a new-found religion and heresy, contrary to God's word." The Queen's summons to surrender was finally refused, and from all the country-side the gentry and common people hastened to join the Earls. On November 14 the city of Durham was occupied: following the old standard of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the banner with the Five Wounds of Christ, the people flocked to the Cathedral, the old altar was once more set in place, and before a thronging con-

gregation, weeping with joy and gratitude, there was celebrated again the Mass.

Next morning the army of the Earls marched south, publishing as they went a formal proclamation:

"We, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, the Queen's true and faithful subjects, to all the same of the old Roman Catholic faith. Know ye that we with many others well disposed, as well of the nobility as others, have promised our faith to the futherance of this sure good meaning. Forasmuch as divers disordered and ill-disposed persons about the Queen's Majesty have by their crafty and subtle dealing, to advance themselves, overthrown in the realm the true and Catholic religion, and by the same abuseth the Queen, dishonoureth the realm, and now lastly seeketh to procure the destruction of the nobility: We therefore have gathered ourselves together to resist force by force, and rather by the help of God and of you good people, to reduce these things amiss, with the restoring of all ancient customs and liberties to God and this noble realm. And lastly, if we shall not do it ourselves, we might be reformed by strangers, to the great hazard of the state of this our country, whereunto we are all bound. God save the Queen."

When the rising broke out, the only government forces in the field were the garrisons of the marches—too small, even if they could have been trusted not to join the insurgents—and the forces under Sussex (now President of the Council of the North) at York. And Sussex was disposed to wobble. He had performed devoted, if unsuccessful, service in Ireland, where it was not his fault if his well-meaning attempts to procure the murder of O'Neil had gone astray; but though a professing Protestant since the beginning of the reign, politically he was not of Cecil's party. He had friends and relatives among the rebels; he was at least partially in sympathy with their aims. In any case his

forces were incapable of dealing with the army of fifteen thousand under the Earls. If he had been quite sure they were going to win, he would certainly have accepted their invitation to join them. As it was, he decided the best thing he could do was to advise the Queen to come to terms with the insurgents rather than "hazard battle against desperate men, with soldiers that fight against their conscience."

If the government's own troops were so much in sympathy with the rising that they were in the field against their consciences, things certainly looked black for Cecil. The rebels were now within fifty miles of Tutbury, where Mary was in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury. A successful dash to the rescue would have won the rest of England. Cecil was warned just in time, and on November 14 the captive Queen was moved hastily (and in great secret, lest the people should rise to save her) southwards to Coventry, where she would be out of reach of the Earls.

It was all that was needed. With the removing of Mary to Coventry, the rebellion began suddenly to collapse. The south of England was unprepared: the other nobles, Arundel, Pembroke, and of course Norfolk, ratted one after another. Alva, whose prompt action might have turned the scale—he had authority from Philip to use his discretion—failed to send reinforcements. The rebels, though strong in numbers, were entirely without guns; consequently, when the hastily raised levies of the government began to take the field, there was nothing to be done but retire and ultimately disperse.

So ended the rebellion of the Earls, the last spontaneous rising of the English people.

"Thank God," wrote Cecil, "our northern rebellion is fallen flat to the ground and scattered away."

He himself, in the very crisis of the affair, had been overtaken by one of those unfortunate bouts of sickness which so often afflicted him when matters were going ill. Now that the danger was over, he made a happy and quick

recovery. Christmas was spent in arranging for the proper punishment of the insurgents and the most satisfactory distribution of forfeited estates. His preliminary instructions had been that "some of the rascals should be hanged by martial law," but none of the "richer sort." Having pondered the matter well over Christmas he then issued a more detailed programme. Persons known to have been connected with the rebellion were to be arrested; after which it might be advisable "to pinch them with some lack of food and pain of imprisonment till they declared the names of as many as they could remember." Such information having been supplied, there should be a general round-up of suspects: those without property to forfeit were to be hanged without trial in the most appropriate places, "their bodies to remain till they fell to pieces where they hung." Anti-clerical as ever: "Some notable example," he enjoins, "to be made of the priests!" As for the "richer sort," they were to have regular trial, otherwise their estates would not be forfeit to the Crown; but in the event of their acquittal they were not to be released, but remanded for trial by the Star Chamber, in which court their conviction would not be in doubt.

Sussex, as President of the North, made up for his suspicious discretion when the issue was still in doubt by the enthusiasm with which he executed the government's retaliation. He and his underlings put to death anything up to a thousand victims by martial law alone, converting the country-side into a veritable shambles in wiping out a rebellion that, until it was over, had been bloodless. Cecil, indeed, was for proceeding even further: "to attain all offenders that might be gotten by process or otherwise"; but he was told that if such a course were taken "many places would be left naked of inhabitants." He was frankly disappointed:

"Some few of them suffered," was his regretful comment.

It was the result of Cecil's deliberate policy of always conciliating, wherever possible, the gentry, that the "meaner

sort" were made to suffer so very disproportionately. But he had no intention of sparing the ringleaders. Northumberland and Westmoreland had escaped to Scotland, where the former was taken by Murray. No pains were spared to have them returned to England. During the course of the rising Cecil had employed a certain Sir Robert Constable, one in the confidence of the Earls, to mingle with the rebels, and, by persuading them of the hopelessness of their cause, to tempt them to desert or disband. Constable had been so successful in this task that Cecil now employed him again: this time to persuade Westmoreland that, if he returned to England and gave himself up, his life would certainly be spared. It was a mission, complained Constable, to entrap his friends "as Judas did Christ"; but this consideration by no means deterred him. Nor would Cecil restrict his reward to a mere thirty pieces of silver: anything up to £1000 might be expended if necessary, as "her Majesty is very desirous to have *these noysome vermin*."

But nothing came of the device. Murray, who dared not surrender Northumberland for fear of the people, was presently shot, and in the anarchy which followed, Westmoreland got clean away, first to Spain and afterwards to the Low Countries. At last, however, after a lapse of two years, Northumberland was taken and condemned. Indecisive in action, and with none of the qualities of a successful commander, he was not afraid to die for the cause he had led. By first offering him his life, if he would conform to the Established Church, Elizabeth, in inflicting the penalty for his nominal treason, conferred on him the crown of martyrdom.

§ 3.

Just as the final embers of the northern conflagration were being stamped out, the blow so long expected was delivered from Rome. Dated the 25th of February, 1570, the Bull *Regnans in Excelsis* pronounced Elizabeth excommunicate, authorized her deposition and absolved her sub-

jects from their allegiance. Once more the lack of synchronization in the attack was working in favour of Cecil. Had the bull been published in time for the Rising of the North, its effect might have been decisive. As it was, it was worse than useless. Pius V, its author, was a saint: it was too much to expect him to be a politician as well—the two professions are rarely combined. The bull, if it were to succeed now, depended on Spain and France to make it operative. Neither Spain nor France (as the Pope should have been informed) were likely to take any action. So far from acting, they would not even permit the publication of the bull in their dominions. True, it satisfied the consciences of any of Elizabeth's Catholic subjects who might feel qualms about rebelling against constituted authority; but even this was inexpedient. Like other foreign observers, the Pope made the error of supposing Elizabeth to be the author of her government's policy. Actually, as Philip's ambassadors were for ever insisting, the only dangerous enemy was Cecil—who "rules all." Once he was removed, it would be possible to do anything with the Queen. So it was that the papal bull not only failed, but gave the arch enemy, Cecil, two important advantages of which he readily availed himself:

Firstly, by associating his policy with the Queen the bull made it all the easier for him to shelter behind insulted royal authority.

Secondly, by seeming to make disloyalty to the Queen a condition of loyalty to the Holy See, it provided just that plausible excuse he badly needed for stamping out Catholicism by persecution.

But, if the bull of deposition was a blunder, it is a mistake to suppose it was without its immediate effect. Though Catholic Spain and France both refused to publish it, it was published in London, under the very nose of the Protestant government, by being affixed to the door of the Protestant Bishop of London. The Queen had one of her periodical fits of panic. She had always known that sooner

or later Cecil's rashness would bring her to ruin! The country was seething with disaffection; the whole of the north had been in open rebellion—and now she found herself excommunicate, formally deposed by the supreme tribunal of Christendom. No wonder, she assumed, that France had been so urgent for the restoring of Mary to Scotland: it must have been the French that had induced the Pope to strike. And all because of Mary, whom she herself had wanted to restore—only Cecil refused to permit it.

A meeting of the Council was summoned. Arundel, her devoted Leicester, all of them gave it as their opinion that the Queen of Scots should be restored—with only two dissentients: Cecil and his knave of a brother-in-law. Interrupting Arundel's arguments, Cecil bluntly declared that the Queen had no true friends but himself and the Protestants. Elizabeth retorted that he was blinded by passion:

"Whatever Master Secretary says," she declared, "I desire to quit this affair and do what the King of France bids me and not be stopped any more by you 'brothers in Christ.'"

[That "brothers in Christ" was an expression to make Cecil wince. It was the kind of thing that made it so difficult for him to pretend she was truly Protestant.]

The massive Bacon fared no better. He declared that in regard to Scotland, if the Queen went on as she had begun, English influence would be supreme there, "and religion, the Protestant religion, will be established from end to end of Britain." On the other hand, "if France lands a force in England," he boomed, "to try to take the Queen of Scots from us, with her Majesty's permission I would strike her head from her shoulders with my own hands."

Of such sturdy stuff was my Lord Keeper Bacon; but the sentiment was not one to find favour with Elizabeth.

"His counsels," she snapped, "were like himself, rash and dangerous." She would not have her cousin's life touched for a second realm: she would rather lose her

own. He would be wise not to speak in such a strain again.

Furiously angry, the Queen is said to have shut herself up for days on end. Disgusted with Cecil and all his works, she seemed on the point of ridding herself of him for good. It was probably the most critical phase of his whole career. And he fully recognized his peril. He and Elizabeth were in the same boat, it was true, and it was to their mutual advantage to keep it floating. But if either party appeared to be scuttling the ship or driving it incontinently upon the rocks, obviously the other was entitled to terminate the amicable understanding. So it was that, at the height of the Leicester affair ten years before, Cecil had made all arrangements for deserting his royal partner and letting her shift for herself. Such a moment seemed to have arrived again. In case of emergency he had already prudently secreted funds in Germany, whither, if matters came to the worst, he could betake himself to affluent retirement. After a visit to the Queen in mid-July, when he had been rated more violently than ever, it really seemed that the moment had come to make his unobtrusive withdrawal. Going straight to Lady Cecil, he bade her get together all the jewels and money she could lay her hands upon; and he prepared to follow him at a moment's notice—"for surely trouble is in store for us."

But he decided to hold on a few days longer, and in those few days his luck began to turn.

For one thing he was able to lay hands on the author of so much of his trouble, the publisher of *Regnans in Excelsis*. It turned out to be a gentleman named Felton, a Catholic barrister. Cecil, being determined to discover the names of all connected with the outrage, had recourse to a device that hereafter he continued to use freely—the rack.¹ But under violent torture Felton would confess nothing but what was known already; namely, that having obtained a

¹ It may be claimed for Cecil that it was he who made torture the *normal* means of extorting evidence in treason cases.

copy of the Bull he had considered it his duty to publish it. He denied that he had any associates; though later, at his trial, he proudly proclaimed that there were twenty-five peers, hundreds of gentlemen and thirty thousand commons prepared to die for the cause of the Pope. After that he was executed on the place where he had committed his crime, being quartered (according to the Spanish report) "*con grandissima crueldad*."

§ 4.

But what, more than anything else, saved Cecil was the very peril to the Queen which the daring of his policy had provoked. For the danger was not ended by the crushing of the northern revolt: beneath the surface, as Cecil knew, was preparing an elaborate and far more dangerous conspiracy.

In August, the same month that Felton was executed, Cecil brought off an ingenious piece of work he had long been plotting to effect. Among the English refugees in the Netherlands was Dr. Story, a lawyer who had been concerned in the prosecutions of heretics in the last reign, and who in the first Parliament of Elizabeth had boldly expressed a wish that the Marian government had dealt with the more highly placed heretics instead of the harmless lesser fry. Latterly, as a naturalized Spanish subject, he had been employed by Alva at Antwerp in searching English vessels for revolutionary literature. Through a certain spy called William Parker (a relation, it would seem, of the Archbishop's¹) Cecil contrived to have him kidnapped on board an English ship and smuggled over to Yarmouth. It was a brilliant capture. Cecil, who had long been nursing his revenge against Story, was gloating over the prospect of torturing him. He had him instantly conveyed to the Tower and racked. Story was an old man now—seventy

¹ According to a marginal note to one of his letters to Cecil at the Record Office, he was a brother. Strype does not mention a brother, William; but cf. Simpson's *Under the Penal Laws*, p. 6.

years of age and very feeble; and, though he faced his tormentors with courage, the rack succeeded in wringing from him enough to confirm the Secretary's forebodings. It was in vain that Philip claimed Story as his own subject: after the affair of the safe-conduct the English government was not likely to be pedantic about such trifles. Story was put upon his trial and condemned to death as a traitor.

But the execution of his sentence was deferred: it was possible the old man might still have his uses. Meanwhile the account of his examination had the advantage of further alarming the Queen. Once Elizabeth could be persuaded that she was cornered and without retreat, Cecil could do anything he wished with her. She had all the more reason for being mollified towards her Secretary in that, things being as they were, it was clearly indicated that there should be at least some show of coming to an understanding with Mary. Suffering, as he was, from an attack of gout he went down to Chatsworth to discuss acceptable terms with his captive. A piquant situation: Cecil coldly deferential, remembering that he was in the presence of a Queen: Mary, recalling the incident of Rokesby—and many other things—interested in attempting to gauge the impassive features of her enemy, to hold the shifty eyes. She afterwards professed herself satisfied with the result of the interview; as did her servant, the Bishop of Ross, who shared in the negotiations. But the sceptical Don Guerau was not deceived:

"All these things," he declared, "are tricks of Cecil's, who thinks thereby to cheat everyone, in which to a certain extent he succeeds."

But the greatest menace was from Spain; hence the surest safeguard against Philip's intrigues was an understanding with France, who certainly would never tolerate Spanish interference in an English civil war. Had the Huguenots been making trouble, the French government might have been drawn towards Spain; but fortunately at this time Cecil's French "brothers in Christ" were lying low, and France could afford a "national" policy. So it

was that the following winter was occupied with a fresh marriage project for the Queen, this time with the Duke of Anjou, the brother of the young King of France. Cecil covered sheets of paper with desirable "Commodities that may follow from the marriage with the Duke of Anjou." Elizabeth, thirty-seven and looking older, agreed to play the coquettish part with her reluctant suitor of twenty. The Protestants of England and France were enthusiastic; Catharine, the Queen-mother, surprised and a little embarrassed. Of course, nothing would please her more than the alliance; but would it not be equally effective if her son were to marry Lady Catharine Grey, Cecil's own candidate (as she had heard) for the succession, and one who would preserve the supremacy of himself and his party? She was informed that Lady Catharine was no more. What a pity! Her son, it appeared, had an absurd idea that he was dishonouring himself by marrying anyone—well, of the Queen of England's reputation! An absurd scruple on his part, of course: one could not afford to be too particular. La Mothe, her ambassador in London, hastened to reassure her. In England, he lied boldly, all her subjects, high and low, honoured and revered the Queen: her Court was a model of respectability: the very authority she wielded was a proof of her purity—"J'ai estimé que cela ne pouvoit procéder de personne mal famée, et où il n'y eust de la vertu." So the matter was allowed to proceed.

"I am not able to discern what is best," Cecil wrote to his representative in Paris; "but surely I see no continuance of her quietness without a marriage."

Not that he seriously thought the Queen would ever marry at all. He knew she wouldn't. But that need not interfere with the all-important negotiations. As he pointed out, it would be quite easy to devise a means to escape at the last moment if she so desired. But—and this was his trump card—if she didn't marry "it will also be necessary to seek by your Majesty's best council the means to preserve yourself, as in the most dangerous and desperate sickness

the help of the best physicians; and surely, how your Majesty shall obtain remedies for your perils I think is only in the knowledge of Almighty God."

Again he held her by fear. It was either marriage or—such perils as only Almighty God (operating through the genius of William Cecil) could avert. To the poor ageing spinster, whose nature rebelled against the physical conditions of marriage, it was no alternative at all.

§ 5.

This renewed, if reluctant, trust imposed by the Queen in her chief minister, is marked (in February, 1571) by her conferring on him the barony of Burghley. Don Guerau would have it that the honour was not unconnected with the negotiations in progress for the release and restoration of the Queen of Scots. The title was taken from the estate which his father had gained by marriage in Northamptonshire, a manor previously, as was fitting, in the possession of the Church. The new peer was curiously contemptuous of his promotion. "And," he signs himself, "as I am now ordered to write, William Burghley." It would almost seem he would have preferred a more tangible reward for his services. "If you list to write truly," he complains, "the poorest Lord in England."

§ 6.

However fully Lord Burghley may have persuaded Mary, and even Elizabeth, that he had been converted in the matter of Scotland, events soon proved that Don Guerau had been right and that his concessions had been merely "tricks." The lengthy negotiations culminated in a final commission held in London, at which the Bishop of Ross represented Mary, and Morton the Scottish regency. The Bishop made the best of the argument of non-resistance, so much favoured by the English government in purely

domestic matters, cleverly quoting in his support the great Protestant authority, Peter Martyr, as well as Bishop Jewel of Salisbury. The latter, who spoke in such matters as one having divine revelation, had proved conclusively that, whatever the crimes of a sovereign, the remedies permissible to a subject "were but prayers and tears." But Morton was impervious to argument. The change in Scotland had been made with very good reason: if the English government were not proposing to support it, the Regency could get on very well by itself.

"That language," fumed the Queen, when she learnt of it, "the Earl of Morton never brought with him from his country: he learnt it here from certain of the council, who deserve to be hanged at the palace gate with a scroll of their words about their necks."

Clearly her Secretary and Lord Keeper had been at their tricks again. "*Penduz à la porte du chateau*," translated La Mothe: if she only dared! But Morton's answer was final and her poor dear sister was as far as ever from being free.

So matters stood when the third Parliament of the reign assembled at the beginning of April. There were abundant reasons for summoning it. The great slump in trade due to the commercial war with the Netherlands had played havoc with the customs receipts; heavy expenses had been incurred by raising forces to defend the border and put down the northern revolt, and a generous vote from Parliament had become imperative. Also—though Lord Keeper Bacon made no allusion to the fact in his opening speech—large sums had been spent in secret aid to the Huguenots and to the revolutionary party in the Netherlands. Finally, a parliamentary attainder was needed before the government could lay hands on the property of the revolted Earls.

Burghley had taken special care to have a strong backing for the government in the Commons, and he also confidently expected the usual opposition in the Upper House would be less formidable than heretofore. The northern

revolt had lessened the Catholic element in the House; Norfolk, though now released from custody, was not allowed to sit; at the same time the government party was swelled by the presence of two new creations, Burghley's own and that of Sackville, who had now become Lord Buckhurst. In these circumstances, and with Protestantism rampant at the events of the past two years, Burghley confidently hoped that the time might be ripe for another forward movement in the interests of the revolutionary faith.

If anything, he had overdone the backing he had procured in the Commons. They were too earnest altogether. Full of zeal for reform, they seemed far from satisfied with Cecil's twelve-year-old establishment. Indeed they were for reforming it away altogether. Let the Queen "seek first the Kingdom of God," they quoted, and all these things—including, they gave it to be understood, even subsidies—would at the proper time be added to her.

On and off they continued in this strain throughout the session, but in the intervals the government managed to carry its most important measures. A shrewd blow was delivered at the claims of Mary of Scots by a Bill against questioning the Queen's title, and for debarring from the throne anyone who should claim the rights of succession; but, contrary to Burghley's original design, the Bill was not made retrospective. A Bill of Attainder was duly passed against Northumberland, Westmoreland and the rest of the leaders of the late rebellion, and their lands declared forfeit to the Crown. Another Bill, provoked by recent events, made it treason to introduce Papal Bulls into the realm, and to reconcile anyone, or be reconciled, to the Roman Church. However, negative measures were not sufficient. The old religion had to be stamped out—that went without saying—but something had to be put in its place, and so far Burghley could not pretend that the new State Church was at present an adequate substitute. "The service of God," he admitted in a "Memorial" to the Queen, "and the sincere profession of Christianity were much decayed . . . and in place of it

partly Papistry, partly Paganism and Irreligion had crept in." Something, clearly, had to be done to give strength and cohesion to the national Establishment. Fortunately the mood of the House was propitious for reintroducing "the little Bill with the Articles" that the previous Parliament had rejected, and so impose on all ministers acceptance of the Convocation's 39 Articles of Religion. This time, as he had hoped, it succeeded in passing both Houses. Personally he would also have made it compulsory for every subject in the land to receive the Communion twice a year, and a Bill to that effect was introduced. In the course of the debate a Catholic peer suggested maliciously that it would be as well if the bishops first decided among themselves what was the nature of the Sacrament they wished to administer; but Burghley brushed aside the objection as frivolous.

"The quiet of the realm," he proclaimed solemnly, "required that the measure should be passed."

As though it were the nature of the *Sacrament* that mattered!

There was another Act he would also have liked to see on the statute book. He was convinced that one of the main sources of disaffection to the new régime was the prevalence of disguised priests, who ministered to the people in secret and were maintained throughout the country in gentlemen's houses. There had occurred to him a happy means of dealing with this evil. Why not treat such "shavelings" as vagrants and gipsies? Consequently he drafted an "*Act against Disguises of Priests*, authorizing these lurking malcontents to be pilloried and whipped or placed in the stocks." But, as Froude regretfully observes, "this practically useful measure was not pressed."

With the single exception of the Communion Bill, all the measures passed were accepted by the Queen—as usual with indifferent grace—and the requisite subsidy having been voted, Parliament was dissolved at the end of May.

§ 7.

During the whole two months of the parliamentary session, Lord Burghley was assiduously engaged in unravelling certain horrifying secrets, concerning which the faithful Commons (seeking ever the Kingdom of God and His righteousness) were in complete and blissful ignorance.

Early in April, when Parliament had only just met, there was delivered to Burghley, from Lord Cobham, the Warden of the Cinque Ports, a mysterious packet of letters, containing (among other things) a copy of the Bull of Deposition and some suspicious papers in cipher. The whole packet, it was alleged, had been taken on the person of a certain Charles Bailly, on his arrival at Dover from the continent.

The letters themselves were a little puzzling, not to say disappointing. They concerned the Queen of Scots and were mildly treasonable in tone, but they threw no light at all, as Burghley had hoped they would, on the conspiracy he knew was forming in the Netherlands—except possibly the one or two of them that were in cipher; but these, since he lacked the key, remained inscrutable.

In the midst of this perplexity, Burghley bethought him of a device which reveals an entirely new facet of his genius. The messenger, Bailly, had been confined in the Marshalsea. Now in the Marshalsea had also been imprisoned, since the rising of the north, an interesting personage called Herle. Connected with several noble Catholic families, this Herle, since his arrest, had sold himself to the government and had shown himself ready to procure the kidnapping or murder of any of his late associates who might be displeasing to the Queen's Majesty. It was uncommonly useful to hold such a man as an ostensible prisoner, whom even his gaolers never suspected of being a government spy. And this was precisely the situation in which to employ him. Acquainted by Burghley with what he had to do, this worthy man made friendly advances to young Bailly, commiserated with him on his arrest and waxed piteous in the relation of his own

misfortunes in the cause. The wretched Bailly was instantly drawn, and Herle was soon able to inform his master that there was something mysterious about the letters, and that Bailly himself was "the most secret minister of all the ill-practices in Flanders."

Herle reported to Burghley on April 11. About the same time came a letter from the Bishop of Ross, who was still in London, saying that he had heard that a packet of letters addressed to him had been detained at Dover and their bearer arrested. He had no idea what they contained, but Burghley should have his entire confidence in the matter.

It was so strange to find the devious minister of the Queen of Scots thus acting for once straightforwardly that Burghley's suspicions were intensified.

Suppose he were to put the Bishop in touch with his messenger in the Marshalsea and make Herle their channel of communication!

For a time the scheme worked splendidly. Letters began to flow from the guileless Bailly to the Bishop, which were carefully copied by Burghley before being passed to their destination. Unfortunately, however, the letters were in cipher and therefore impossible to interpret. Also, before very long, the well-meaning Herle made a regrettable blunder in referring to something with which he had no business to be acquainted. Bailly became suspicious and instantly closed like an oyster.

What to do next? It was against all Burghley's instincts to use violence—a confession of technical weakness. Still, there were occasions when violence was unavoidable and he was inclined to think this was one. From the comparative comfort of the Marshalsea, he had Bailly transferred to the most unsavoury lodgings in the Tower. There the great minister came to interview him in person: confronted him with the copies of his letters and demanded the key to the cipher. Bailly, as he had expected, refused; and on May 1, despite the pleadings of the Bishop, he was tortured. Herle had a glimpse of his victim tottering back to his cell, "dis-

coloured and pale as ashes"; but so far nothing had been revealed.

Perhaps devices were better after all. Burghley rapidly thought out another. Now Dr. Story, who had been sentenced to death in the previous year, was still alive in the Tower. Bailly, it seemed, did not know him by sight. . . . What did that suggest? Obviously that someone—preferably his betrayer, Parker, who would best be able to sustain the part—should *impersonate* Story!

No time was lost. The very same night Parker presented himself to the unsuspecting Bailly as the renowned and heroic Doctor. Bailly, in deep devotion, listened humbly to the advice that the wise old man had to offer him. Nothing, said the pseudo-Story, could be gained by resisting further—too much was already known. By far the best course to adopt now would be to decipher the letters and offer to act in future as a government spy. Burghley would be certain to jump at such a proposal, and by betraying his new masters, Bailly would be able to serve the cause far better than he was doing at present.

Once more the simple Bailly was caught in the toils. No longer had Burghley to threaten to cut off his ears: the young man told all he knew and surrendered the key of the cipher. (But to his bewildered surprise his offer to be a spy was refused.)

It was a remarkable tale that Burghley was now able to piece together:

Bailly, it appeared, had been dispatched from Antwerp by Ridolfi, the Italian banker. Burghley knew the man well. He had been settled in London since Queen Mary's reign and enjoyed the complete confidence of the government. Only the previous year he had dined with Burghley: his financial and political services had been often useful, and after an audience with the Queen, he had recently left for Antwerp on the government's own business. But the plausible financier was even more in the confidence of the Catholics. Out of sympathy with their

grievances and with those of the Queen of Scots, he had taken it upon him to serve as that co-ordinating factor which had hitherto been so sadly lacking. So it was that he had betaken himself to Alva: from Alva he was going on to Rome and from Rome to Madrid. The general object (as far as Bailly could tell) was the landing of a Spanish force in the eastern counties to act in co-operation with another English rising against the Queen.

Bailly's correspondence with the Bishop, which it was now possible to decipher, revealed further interesting circumstances. The letters alleged originally to have been found on Bailly were spurious. The real letters (with the regrettable connivance of Lord Cobham himself!) had been delivered to the Bishop of Ross, who in conjunction with the Spanish ambassador had concocted these sham letters and passed them on to Burghley to put him off the scent.

The next problem was, therefore, how to get at the Bishop and (if possible) the genuine letters that Ridolfi had had dispatched by Bailly.

Another job for Herle! Luckily the Bishop was still in the dark about that worthy, for Bailly's hasty letter, warning him, had been carefully intercepted by Burghley. It was therefore possible to stage an amusing comedy. Herle was to be examined, rated, threatened with the rack and placed in the closest confinement. This prelude having been duly performed, Herle in his rôle of devoted martyr wrote piteously to the Bishop, begging for his sympathy and confidence. The Bishop was fully convinced of his honesty; but, all the same, he saw no reason for imparting to the fellow what Bailly didn't know and what Burghley especially wished to discover, namely, to whom the original letters had been addressed.

The ingenuity of the device deserved a greater success. As it was, there was no alternative but to examine the Bishop himself. On May 13 three of the Council repaired to his house and proceeded to hold an examination. The Bishop admitted that the Queen of Scots had dispatched letters by

Ridolfi to Alva, to the Pope and to the King of Spain, but merely to ask for assistance in Scotland. The original letters he declared he had destroyed. He was then asked who were designated by the ciphers 30 and 40. The Spanish ambassador, he replied, and the Queen of Scots. That was all the information they could extract, and as even Burghley hesitated to apply the rack to an ambassador, it only remained to test the statements he had made. He already knew from Bailly that the Spanish force was intended for England rather than Scotland, consequently he was not surprised when both Don Guerau and Queen Mary denied all knowledge of the ciphers 30 and 40. Evidently the Bishop had still something to conceal; but at present there was nothing to be done but place him under arrest and enjoin a stricter guard for the Scottish Queen. Also, it being now unlikely that Story could be employed in any future device, the old man was at last hanged and disembowelled according to his original sentence.

§ 8.

But by this time another and more promising line of investigation was being opened out. It had recently come to Burghley's knowledge—how it cannot now be known—that the enterprising Hawkins was engaged in certain suspicious negotiations with the King of Spain, nominally for the return of the English sailors taken prisoners at San Juan de Ulloa. Once Burghley's suspicions were aroused—and he always kept the house of the Spanish ambassador watched—it was necessary for Hawkins to make a change in his tactics. He proceeded to tell everything, or at any rate as much as was necessary to allay Burghley's doubts. He admitted that, in order to secure the release of his friends, he had made advances to Don Guerau and had also sent his friend George Fitzwilliam to Madrid to offer in his name to desert to the Spanish cause with all the ships and men he could command. Not, of course, that he intended

(Burghley might be sure) to carry out his part of the bargain, but just by way of a "practice." Early in May Fitzwilliam returned to England reporting moderate success; but King Philip, to be sure of his good faith, required a letter of recommendation from the Queen of Scots. Here was obviously a "device" all ready to Burghley's hand. Having now a very definite hold on Hawkins, he felt he could trust him sufficiently to proceed with the matter. Fitzwilliam was therefore permitted to visit the Queen of Scots and deliver the letters and presents he brought from her friends the Duke and Duchess de Feria. (The Duke, it will be remembered, had been ambassador to England at the beginning of the reign and his wife was English, a Dormer.) Mary, as might have been expected, was ready to do all she could, saying "she must pity prisoners for she was used as one herself, and that she would do any pleasure she could to relieve an Englishman." Fitzwilliam then returned to London with a letter of recommendation from Mary to the King of Spain, which Hawkins then forwarded "in a parcel directed to your Lordship" to Burghley. There was "also," he wrote, "a book sent from her to the Duchess of Feria with the old service in Latin, and in the end she hath written this word with her own hand:

"Absit nobis gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

" 'MARIA R.' "

Highly diverting! By all means let Fitzwilliam return with the parcel to Madrid and find out all he could.

Philip was entirely satisfied. The prisoners were released with ten dollars apiece in their pockets, and Hawkins was to draw £40,000 for his share from King Philip's agents in London. Hawkins, on the other part, undertook to desert with his fleet to Spain and to be at sea, ready to place himself at Alva's disposal, during September and October.

On September 4, Hawkins reported this happy termination of the device from Plymouth:

"Their practices be very mischievous, and they be never idle, but God, I hope, will confound them and turn their devices upon their own necks."

On whose necks Hawkins would turn his own devices would naturally depend on circumstances. He had performed his service to Burghley, but he had not told him all that Philip of Spain was intending. If the Duke of Alva's preparations were completed in time and had any prospect of success, there was still nothing to prevent his carrying out his original bargain with the ships entrusted to him by the government!

§ 9.

However, before Hawkins's letter arrived from Plymouth, Burghley had stumbled quite by accident on an entirely different track, and one which led far more directly to the actual heart of the mystery.

At the very beginning of September there had been sent him a bag containing money and ciphered letters, intercepted on their way from the Duke of Norfolk to an agent of his in Shropshire, and ultimately destined for the Marian party in Scotland. Higford and Barker, two secretaries of the Duke's, were arrested, and Banister, his agent in Shropshire. The rack soon did its work, and with bewildering rapidity the ramifications of the whole complex plot were discovered. Norfolk, of course, had not thought, even when there was time, of destroying his compromising papers: the confessions of Higford revealed their whereabouts; Barker contradicted Higford—they had no concerted story to tell—and Norfolk himself contradicted them both. Finally, whatever was still obscure, the Bishop of Ross revealed. He was brought up to London from his confinement with the Bishop of Ely and was told that, if he failed to tell all he knew, no ambassador's privilege would save him from the rack. Burghley, of course, was bluffing; but his bluff was entirely successful. The Bishop told all and more than all,

not hesitating in his panic even to betray the honour of his mistress.

Thus Burghley had it all. How the banker Ridolfi had set out from England with the approval of Norfolk and the Queen of Scots, taking with him letters of credence (or the copies of such letters deposited with the Spanish ambassador) from a number of Catholic nobles; how from Alva in the Netherlands he had proceeded to Rome and thence to Madrid; how the object of his mission had been to concert a landing of Spanish troops from the Netherlands with another rising of the Catholics in England; how Mary was to marry the Duke of Norfolk and Elizabeth be dethroned in her favour.

With the unmasking of the conspirators the whole project naturally collapsed. Alva had been sceptical from the outset. He had distrusted Ridolfi as a gas-bag. In any case he had been against moving till Elizabeth had been kidnapped or assassinated. Now he turned a deaf ear to all entreaties: further action he refused even to contemplate.

§ 10.

So Norfolk was left to his fate. It was the opportunity that Burghley had long been seeking, for the Duke, though a Protestant, possessed a most dangerous influence. Standing as he did at the head of the old nobility, he was the natural representative of all those forces in the country which were most opposed to Burghley and the revolution it was his aim to establish. When the conspiracy of 1569 had come to light, Burghley almost had him in his power—but not quite. That conspiracy had been directed against himself and it was very doubtful whether anything clearly treasonable could be proved. Burghley had realized this distinction, and as he had written to the Queen:

“If the Duke shall be charged with the crime of treason and shall not thereof be convicted, he shall not only save his credit but increase it.”

Therefore it had been considered wiser merely to

"inquire of the facts and circumstances and not by any speech to note the same as treason."

But the circumstances were now very different. The Duke had unquestionably been plotting against the Queen herself and there was abundant evidence to prove it. Being certain this time of a condemnation, Burghley could now rid himself for ever of the most dangerous enemy to his own political domination.

The remainder of the year was occupied in preparing the case for the Crown; but meanwhile, in December, Don Guerau was summoned before the Council and for his share in the conspiracy was peremptorily ordered to leave the country. After some delay he complied; but not before he had concerned himself in a farcical attempt on the life of Burghley, carefully nursed and then foiled by the faithful and ingenious Herle. The same month Burghley at last contrived to publish the whole infamous case against the Queen of Scots, embodied, with copies of the so-called "Casket Letters," in the famous *Detectio* of Buchanan. Its illustrious author was of the Regent's party in Scotland and later became the tutor of the Scottish boy-King. The moderation of his case against the Queen is reflected in the full title of his work: *The Detection of the Doings of Mary Queen of Scots, touching the Murder of her Husband, and her Conspiracy, Adultery, and Pretended Marriage with the Earl of Bothwell*. Its early publication, Burghley reckoned, would allow time for it to prepare the minds of the forthcoming Parliament for the work he intended it to perform.

With the new year all was ready for the trial of the Duke of Norfolk. Shrewsbury, the guardian of the Queen of Scots, presided, and the jury was composed of twenty-six peers, all carefully chosen for the purpose. It included all the new creations of the revolutionary era except Hunsdon, who could not be spared from his duties on the border; but Hunsdon's absence was more than compensated for by

the inclusion of Reginald Grey, especially raised for the occasion to the earldom of Kent; and of the Earl of Hertford, who since the trouble about his wife's pretensions to the throne had been excluded from his seat in the Lords.

The verdict of such a court could have been anticipated: the Duke was found guilty on every charge. Yet, though the trial was unfair and the jury deliberately prejudiced, in view of the evidence it can hardly be pretended that any other judgment could have been given. Even so, Burghley's task was as yet only half completed. It was one thing to sentence the Duke to death: it was another altogether to persuade the Queen to execute him. Three times the warrant was prepared and signed: three times her Majesty at the last moment relented and ordered the warrant to be cancelled. So far she prided herself on the leniency of her rule: apart from the few hundreds—a thousand at the most—of common people hanged after the northern revolt, there had been no political executions at present except those of Felton and Story. And who were Felton and Story? But a peer of the realm, a peer of the blood royal, the Premier Duke and kinsman to Majesty herself—that was another matter. And there was a further explanation of the Queen's reluctance. Instinctively she realized that Norfolk's death meant not merely the execution of a traitor, but the triumph of the revolutionary extremists. That Norfolk was indeed technically a traitor it was impossible to deny; but only because the forces of political reaction (with which she herself was half in sympathy) had been so strong that they had driven him, patently against his will, to deal in treasonable measures. His death, therefore, would symbolize to all the world the final victory of Burghley and of the cause he represented. Did she desire that victory? Or rather, could she contrive to prevent it?

To Burghley, admittedly, the death of Norfolk was all-important; but he had carefully foreseen the opposition he would have to encounter from the Queen and had laid his

plans in such a way that before very long she would have to surrender.

When Parliament met on May 8 it was not against Norfolk that the initial attack was directed: that would have been to invite a rebuff. Pursuing his usual tactics of demanding twice as much as he expected to obtain, Burghley proceeded immediately against the Queen of Scots. Fired by the enormities made public by Buchanan's *Detectio*, the Parliament was asked to pass a Bill of Attainder against Mary. That was the major demand. Only secondarily did deputations of both Houses and of Convocation wait upon the Queen to request the instant execution of Norfolk. The Bishops and Archbishops were replete with precedents from the Old Testament—the New was useless in such an emergency as this. It was manifestly the will of Almighty God that the Duke of Norfolk should die: very well—let Majesty take to heart the lesson of Agag!

Perhaps it was unfortunate that the Bishops had been allowed to meddle. Majesty had a sad lack of respect for the hierarchy of her own Establishment: any course they suggested usually drove her at once to the contrary. So ungraciously, indeed, were they received on this occasion that Burghley, in his anxiety, became physically ill:

"The Commons," he wrote despairingly, "are sound throughout, and in the Lords there is no lack; but in the Highest person such slowness and such stay in resolution as it seemeth God is not pleased that the surety shall succeed. With this and such like I am overthrown in heart. I have no spark of good spirits left in me to nourish health in my body, so as now I am forced to be carried into the Parliament House and to her Majesty's presence. To lament openly is to give more comfort to our adversaries. I see no end of our miseries. The fault is not with us: yet it must be so imputed for saving the honour of the Highest."

It was a critical issue. In the face of the growing discontent at home and the hostility of Spain abroad, it was only by securing the active alliance of France that the forces of reaction could be restrained. Hence all through the difficulties of the preceding year Burghley had been doing his utmost to push forward the project of marrying the Queen to the French King's brother, Anjou. In support of the match he even resorted to astrology: *Venus*, he was reassured to discover, *est in domo proprio, conjuncto Mercurio, domino filiorum. Et idcirco spes magna data de filio uno robusto, claro, et felici in aetate sua matura.* That should have convinced the most sceptical. Yet, as Burghley was aware, there were two insuperable obstacles—the principals themselves: Elizabeth, for physical reasons, would always shrink from marriage; Anjou, for physical reasons and others, shrank equally from marrying Elizabeth. When it became patent at last that nothing could ever come of it, both parties agreed to drop the project, saving their respective honours by making religion the pretext for breaking off. Anjou was delighted, and ungallantly expressed his relief at not having to marry "a common whore"—England's Virgin Queen! But as the two governments (and their Protestant subjects) were none the less anxious for an alliance, Alençon, the more tractable younger brother, was substituted for the fastidious Anjou. So relations continued friendly. However, something more than friendliness was needed for mutual support against Spain, and Burghley, as well as Catharine, was aware that without the guarantee of a marriage neither side could rely on the other.

And that was just now the difficulty. From the experience of the Anjou negotiations, the French government was growing suspicious of Elizabeth's sincerity. And with good reason. Elizabeth was not sincere: she would no more marry Alençon than she would Anjou. And Burghley knew it. But at all costs the Court of France must not know it. At least there must be a prospect, however illusory, of marriage. If, at this critical juncture, Elizabeth showed

herself so lukewarm in her own cause—sparing the Queen of Scots and the patently traitorous Norfolk—the suspicions of the French would be confirmed, and their support, imperatively necessary, would be withheld.

Yet the Queen continued obstinate. She insisted that the Bill of Attainder against Mary should be dropped: quixotically "she could not put to death the bird that had flown to her for succour from the hawk." Burghley could not see why not; but the utmost Elizabeth would permit was an alternative bill (which she had privately no intention of approving) to deprive the Queen of Scots of her right of succession.

It was time for the final assault. Yet another petition of the two Houses was presented—urgent, almost menacing. The Queen, for her own safety, for the safety of the realm, must permit the Attainder to pass: at the very least—and of this they would suffer no refusal—the Duke of Norfolk must die!

To Elizabeth the killing of the Queen of Scots was still unthinkable: it would be an outrage unprecedented; a betrayal of her sacred order. At all costs she would save her, and if she could save her only by sacrificing the miserable Norfolk—well, Norfolk would have to go. She signed the warrant once more, and this time she did not recall it.

The Duke in his life had cut but a sorry figure. Brought up under the care of Foxe, the Protestant propagandist, yet thrust by his rank to the head of the conservative opposition, he was the victim throughout of a divided allegiance. When the Ridolfi project was first launched, he had attempted to resolve the contradiction by consenting to become a Catholic; but when faced with death he proclaimed he had always been sincerely a Protestant, and on the scaffold it was Foxe, his old tutor, who ministered ghostly consolation. It is characteristic of him that one of his last sentiments on earth was of gratitude that Burghley was to be the "adopted father" of his children—his "unfortunate brats," as he humbly described them. Weak, irresolute, in danger faith-

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less, he was the worst of leaders to the cause he had reluctantly adopted.

Yet his death, none the less, was a great and personal triumph for Lord Burghley, and it was with quiet satisfaction that he could comment laconically in his journal:

“June 2, 1572: The Duke of Norfolk suffred.”

PART THREE
LORD TREASURER OF ENGLAND

“ I conclude, therefore, that a prince need trouble little about conspiracies when the people are well disposed, but when they are hostile and hold him in hatred, then he must fear everything and everybody.”

MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince* : Chapter XIX.

I

TRANSITION

"JULY 15"—six weeks after the death of the Duke of Norfolk—the Journal notes impersonally: "Lord Burghley made Lord Tresorer of England, 14 Eliz., 1572." This new and exalted office is the formal recognition of his complete supremacy in the State. The destruction of the Duke was the triumph of Burghley and the new men over the old feudal nobility of the realm; it was the victory of the progressive cause over one, at least, of the allies of the old religion. But for Burghley personally it meant something more: the strengthening of his hold upon the Queen. Hitherto Elizabeth had allowed herself, somewhat resentfully, to be dragged at her minister's heels, making feeble efforts, from time to time, to transfer her confidence to the "conservatives," and only out of sheer terror shrinking back to her Secretary, the author of her troubles, but her only imaginable saviour. She had been deeply shaken by the revolt of her subjects in the north, by her segregation from the spiritual unity of Christendom, by the discovery of so vast a conspiracy to effect her deposition from the throne; but, by the act of sacrificing Norfolk, she had effectually burnt her boats. Henceforward she knew she was committed to Burghley utterly.

For however much, in the future, she might wish for an alternative, there was none any longer possible. The older generation was dying off: rascally old Winchester had at length terminated his long and shady career: Pembroke also was dead. Shrewsbury (the Scottish Queen's gaoler) and Sussex were now both devotedly Cecilian. Christopher

Hatton, her latest pet, was just a good-looking fop, interested in politics merely for personal gain; while Leicester, for no apparent reason but the childish annoyance of Burghley, had chosen to throw in his lot with the Puritan extremists. Better Burghley, a thousand times, than Robin and his knavish Calvinists!

So it was that the execution of Norfolk, besides being a decisive event in Burghley's career, marks also, as it happens, a transition between the two main periods of his administration—a transition emphasized by the appearance of a fresh generation of courtiers and politicians. Among these new arrivals was Hatton, for instance; and another, of far greater importance, Walsingham.

Francis Walsingham was really a find of Burghley's, who had originally employed him to keep an eye on Ridolfi, at the time when that enterprising financier was suspected of some connection with the rising of the north. Subsequently, when (on Burghley's elevation to the peerage) Thomas Smith returned from Paris to take over the duties of Secretary, Walsingham had succeeded Smith as ambassador in France. It was Walsingham who had been negotiating in Paris about the marriage to Anjou; but he too was soon to be withdrawn to England to assume the Secretaryship, and especially to take charge of that important department of the office, the conduct of the secret service. For this work he was admirably fitted by his natural endowments and by the whole complexion of his mind. The ruling passion of his life was a dour enthusiasm for the Calvinistic faith: his practical genius the shadowing, trapping and hunting down of "papists"—whether potentially dangerous or otherwise. To the accomplishment of this end, he elaborated still further Burghley's complicated system of spies and *agents provocateurs*. He was soon to have emissaries everywhere, classified and organized according to their several qualifications: those who specialized in worming themselves into the society of Catholics and reporting their plans and intentions; those who were best for suggesting and pre-



SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM

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nation as a single flock, was everywhere rent by obstinate sectaries, impatient questioners of the formulæ imposed by the Government. Moreover, wherever he turned Burghley could not but observe a perplexing mixture of popery and atheism (as he expressed it) "creeping in." The papists, indeed, so far from submitting, were growing daily more "open" and truculent. It had been hoped that, as the old Marian clergy died off, the laity would gradually become absorbed into the Protestant Church; but this happy solution seemed as yet very far from being realized. Only a few years previously (in 1568) a college had been founded at Douai, by Dr. Allen of Oxford, for the training of English Catholic refugees for the priesthood. Thence, very soon, relays of newly ordained "seminarists," mostly young Oxford men, flowed over to England, dedicated to the work of reconciling lapsed Catholics to the Church and keeping alive the old religion in their native land. They brought with them the new spirit of the Counter-Reformation—very different from the torpid Catholicism of the elder generation—and possessing, as they did, all the zeal and enthusiasm that the State clergy so conspicuously lacked, they threatened to check for ever the further Protestantizing of the nation.

Here, then, was a definitely new phase of the religious struggle: a fresh instance of transition. But Burghley had always perceived that the cause of the revolution was not merely national but European. It was on the whole international front that the contest would have to be fought out. For a time, political jealousies—the rivalry of France and Spain—might obscure the underlying religious issue and postpone the ultimate conflict: but not indefinitely. It was chiefly the resources of England that were keeping alive the revolution in Europe. Therefore, as soon as circumstances would allow, Spain, at any rate, in defence of Catholic Christendom, would endeavour by force to restore a Catholic government to England. So far Philip, for purely political reasons, had been interested in preserving Elizabeth: in spite of every provocation—the connived-at piracy of the

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English sailors, the secret encouragement of the revolting Netherlanders, the barefaced confiscation of his treasure—he had still endeavoured to avert an open rupture. But if he could overcome his difficulties in Flanders, if he could come to some arrangement with the King of France, then certainly he would take the earliest opportunity to pay off old scores, and at the same time discharge his duty as a loyal son of Holy Church.

Now, any such attempt on Philip's part would be sure to aim primarily at the release of Mary and the placing of her on the English throne. Therefore Mary was still the link that connected Burghley's enemies at home and abroad: it was she alone, the representative of the Catholic population of England, who rendered the Spaniard really dangerous.

So it was that, in the next and finally decisive period of Burghley's rule, there were three main objects he set himself consistently to achieve: (1) the stamping out of the practice of Catholicism in the country: to be effected, as circumstances should suggest, by drastic persecution; (2) the killing, at the earliest possible occasion, of the Queen of Scots; and (3) the staving off, till Mary should have been put to death, of the inevitable conflict with Spain—yet at the same time (and here is the transition in foreign diplomacy) preparing for the conflict by a gradual *rapprochement* with France.

The conduct of foreign relations Burghley continued to keep jealously in his own hands. His correspondence with ambassadors abroad, his summarized dispatches, drafts of instructions and memorials of policy to be pursued fill volume after volume of the official State Papers. His new office, however, made him also directly responsible for the national finances. It was an appropriate service. His natural parsimony was a quality after his mistress's own heart: "with her money," she used to say, "and his head—they could do anything." And yet (according to the admiring Camden) "he never liked that the Treasury should

grow too great while the rest languished and pined away; but he made it his endeavour that both Prince and people might grow rich."

Nor did his duties at the Treasury prevent him from exercising a vigilant supervision over general domestic affairs. He continues to be more regular than any at meetings of the Council. He still presides over the Court of Wards. As judge in the Court of Star Chamber "there was not a day in term when he received not threescore, fourscore or a hundred petitions, which he commonly read that night and gave every man answer himself the next morning as he went to the hall." He was truly fortunate in being so constituted that "he was ever more weary of a little idleness than of great labour."

But, though his energy was unabated, he was already feeling prematurely the weight of his advancing years. His old enemy, the gout, grew steadily more aggressive, often inflicting severe pain and confining him continually to his bed. The only exercise he could take was riding, upon a little mule, about the winding paths of his new gardens at Theobalds; and there survives a portrait of him so mounted, looking precisely as his contemporary biographer describes him—"one of the sweetest and most well-favoured, well-mannered old men that hath been seen."

The simplicity, indeed, of his tastes and mode of life was a pattern to his age, which admired—but refrained from imitating. In spite of his great wealth and three princely establishments, in his personal habits he was frugally austere, "eating but two or three dishes: drinking very seldom wine." His various households, whether he were in residence or not, were ordered with unvarying strictness and regularity: dining in hall at eleven and supping at six, hearing prayers every morning and evening in chapel and sermons every Sunday from his chaplains. Burghley himself, with methodical charity, would set aside calculated sums for distribution among the poor; he never failed the Communion every first of the month, and latterly, when "by his infirmitie not

hable to goe abroade, he used every morning and eveninge to have a quishinge laid by his bed-syde, where he praied daily on his knees without faile." In short, as the founder and mainstay of the new national religion, he felt it incumbent on him to be an example to the nation at large.

The secret, indeed, of Burghley's indefatigable devotion to the public service would seem to lie in the fact that, with him, private and public interests were so closely identified as to be almost indistinguishable. From the moment he entered Elizabeth's service, the fortunes of himself and his house were inextricably bound up with his sovereign's. Consequently—apart from prudent intriguing on occasion in the interest of the Grey succession (merely as a second string in the event of Elizabeth's failing him)—it was with almost literal truth that he could affirm: "I have not since your Majesty's reigne, any one day's joye, but in your Majesty's honor and weale."

Nevertheless, subsidiary to his devotion to the Queen's person was a healthy solicitude for the future and worldly advancement of his family. In earlier days, his eldest son, Thomas Cecil, had been a source of grave anxiety. Sent abroad to complete what little education he had contrived to absorb, he had sadly misbehaved himself in Paris; whence it seemed probable he would return "like a spending sot, meet only to keep a tennis court." His father begged him "banish his wanton lusts," for he would rather "have him lost by an honourable death than be troubled with him in this way." But all that was by now forgiven, if not forgotten. Having sown the last of his wild oats, the prodigal had returned repentant, and married (as his father had arranged) one of the Neville heiresses, a daughter of the deceased Lord Latimer.

At the time of their father's elevation to his baronage, little Robert and Elizabeth were still young children. Anne, however, was fifteen and marriageable. There had been some talk previously of her betrothal to Sir Henry Sidney's heir, the boy who was to become the famous Sir Philip; but

Burghley had hinted pretty plainly that he was aiming at something better. This he was able to achieve in the year of Norfolk's execution, when he procured as son-in-law the most important of his own wards, Edward de Vere, the young Earl of Oxford. Burghley had high expectations of the match. Lord Oxford was a youth of parts: he would link up the Stamford Cecils with the oldest nobility of the land, and doubtless increase at Court the influence of his father-in-law and all his father-in-law represented. But (alas!) the marriage was to prove a disappointment. Oxford possessed all the graces he should have needed for the winning of his sovereign's affection: he was personally handsome, an accomplished dancer, as skilful with the lance as with the foil. Unfortunately, as he grew to maturity, he proved to be something else that was unnecessary: a poet—perhaps a genius; endowed, at any rate, with some typical foibles of genius—extravagance, choleric pride and a regrettable addiction to low company. Having travelled on the Continent, he dressed thereafter with foppish eccentricity and became that bugbear of the Elizabethan philistine—"an Englishman Italianate." As borrower and lender he received Polonius-like reproofs from his worried father-in-law; but he had the shocking satisfaction of calling the worthy Philip Sidney, to his face, a "puppy." Burghley was extremely patient and long-suffering. It was said of him that "there was never any man living in his place did more respect and esteem the Nobility." Certainly the rank of his outrageous son-in-law led him to connive at much that he could never have pardoned in a culprit less exalted. One of the noble youth's pre-nuptial escapades had been to run through the body one of the servants at Cecil House. Luckily the coroner's jury shared Burghley's lofty estimate of the Nobility:

"July 1567" (runs the entry in Burghley's journal):
 "Tho. Bryncknell, an under Cook, was hurt by the Erle
 of Oxford at Cecill-house, whereof he dyed, and by

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verdict *felo de se*, with running upon a poynt of a Fence Sword of the said Erle."

Marriage failed to curb his impetuous temper. His father-in-law's reverence for Nobility, so far from having a propitiating effect, seemed only to breed in him a corresponding contempt. He spread slanderous reports of the great minister's personal dealings with him, complained bitterly of mysterious ill-usage, and for a period he even became estranged from his wife. He appears to have been under some fantastic delusion (surely most improbable!) that Burghley had been setting her to *spy* upon him. But even behaviour such as this was tolerable in a *de Vere*; and Burghley, so far from showing resentment, used all the influence he could command to restore the Earl to his wilfully lost favour with the Highest. Yet to the end, with but intervals of sulky compliance, Lord Oxford remained morose and defiant, writing plays and poetry in questionable retirement and perpetually associating with his disreputable actors and mountebanks. An ungracious relative—though possibly, in his own way (as some conjecture), an even greater than the great Lord Burghley!

Fortunately, in this period of transition, the Great Man was too fully occupied with affairs of state to brood very long over domestic disappointments. "He can never be a good statesman," as he himself used to say, "who respecteth not the publique more than his own private." As day succeeded day, the mass of his labours grew ever more mountainous. Yet a time was found, by some miracle of organized routine, for everything: each task was accomplished with efficiency, thoroughness and punctuality. In addition to his multifarious dispatches and accounts, his correspondence was still further swollen by innumerable private petitions, memorials concerning the state of the Church, "projects" for this and that, letters from his secret agents at home and abroad, letters from Ireland, from the stewards of his private estates, schemes

for new trading ventures or for the establishment of fresh industries. Only at meal times did he permit himself to relax, when "he delighted to talk and be merry with his friends." Not that, at any period in his life, he possessed any intimate associate: "he had never any favorite nor any inward companion, as great men commonly have . . . neither made he any man of his counsel, nor any ever knew his secrets." But he knew well how to make himself affable to his acquaintances, could win a confidence by an affectionate linking of arms. So, also, he possessed (according to the not too happily metaphorical Fuller) "a pretty witrack in himself, to draw speech out of the most sullen and silent gentleman at his table." There were occasions, indeed, on which he could reveal an endearing and unexpected simplicity. "If he could get his table set round with his young little children, he was then in his kingdom. It was exceeding pleasure to hear what sport he would make with them, with such pretty questions and witty allurements as much delighted himself, the children and his hearers."

And then, the meal being finished, the Great Man would rise from the table, and quitting the company of his little prattlers, hurry back, erect and conscientious, to his desk, intent on some memorial of "business to be performed": the devising, perhaps, of a few witty allurements for the Queen of Scots, or the framing of certain other questions, less pretty, to be submitted to some tortured seminarist on the rack.

II

"MONSIEUR"

§ 1.

THROUGHOUT the diplomacy of the next twelve years there were two distinct principles that had to be constantly reconciled:

(1) Since ultimately war with Spain seemed inevitable, it was advisable to prepare for it by a close understanding with the "*politique*" government in France.

(2) While Mary remained alive, to be a rallying point for Catholics at home, war with Spain would be disastrous. Therefore, above all, the Spanish government had to be kept distracted in the Netherlands. At the same time, any aid given to the Flemish malcontents would have to be secret; for it would never do for Philip to consider it worth his while to declare war. For the same reason relations with Spain would have to be as friendly as possible outwardly—especially if the French government should turn against the Huguenots and itself make overtures to Philip. Finally, if the French showed a tendency to be too nationally aggressive in their aid to the rebels in Flanders, such aid would have to be controlled or, in the last resort, even betrayed.

A simultaneous regard for these two principles was attended by serious difficulties. The real antagonism between the governments of Spain and England made it hard to maintain even the semblance of friendship: English sympathy with the Protestant Flemings was increasingly impossible to conceal: the piratical enterprise of English seamen threatened constantly the ruin of all. Hampered continually

by the vagaries of his mistress or the fanatical impetuosity of subordinates, Burghley had to watch every shifting of the political situation abroad and make cautious adjustments of his policy to meet every feint and manœuvre. His tireless assiduity was rewarded by the postponement of war for twelve important years. But though in securing this delay his diplomacy was of inestimable value towards the attainment of his final object, the devious twists and turnings of its course, if followed in detail, would obscure rather than elucidate the essential features of his career. Broadly, as has been suggested, it amounted to a cautious "diplomatic revolution"—a gradual but deliberate abandonment of Spain and reliance on the support of France—and the personality who quaintly symbolizes this transition, popping in and out between the diplomatic scene-shifting, is that grotesque little figure, Elizabeth's latest suitor, Alençon—or, as he was soon to be generally designated, "Monsieur."¹

§ 2.

In the previous autumn, just as the Ridolfi business was at its height, there came news to London of the famous victory of Lepanto. Under the brilliant young John of Austria (King Philip's bastard brother) the might of Spain had shattered the Turk in the Mediterranean and championed gloriously the cause of threatened Christendom. With this recent triumph to his credit King Philip, for all his "practices," was not to be lightly trifled with. His ambassador, Don Guerau, had to go: in the light of the Ridolfi disclosures, no other course was open; but he was scarcely out of the country when Burghley was making friendly overtures to Antonio Guaras, a Spanish commercial agent in London. Guaras was flattered by the great man's attentions:

¹ When Anjou, two years later, succeeded to the throne, Alençon, as his next eldest brother, became Duc d'Anjou, with the customary appellation of the King's eldest brother—"Monsieur."

“It is true that hitherto he has undoubtedly been the enemy of peace and tranquility, for his own bad ends; but I am convinced that he is now well-disposed, which means that the Queen and Council are so, for he and no one else rules the whole affairs of the State.”

And Burghley had done something to justify his opinion. He had promised to make an end of the bad old practice of allowing the Flemish pirates to refit in English harbours. He would even go further and expel for good the scoundrel de la Marck and his crews of murderous “water-beggars.” Simple Antonio Guaras! He was not to know—how should he?—that it was by a plan long concerted with Burghley that de la Marck, when he did leave England, immediately seized upon the town of Brille. Once established there, having murdered all the religious he could lay his hands on, he hurled defiance at the world.

It was a masterly stroke. Seething with discontent against Alva’s exorbitant taxation, the Netherlands were now ripe for revolt. When Brille was taken (on April 1) town after town along the coast proceeded to declare against Spain. Mons, in the south, was occupied by Orange’s brother, Louis of Nassau, and presently English and French volunteers were serving side by side on behalf of the rebel cause.

Meanwhile a treaty had been made between England and France for a concerted attack upon Alva. But though it was important that Philip should be distracted in Flanders, official French aggression in that neighbourhood was a thing Burghley could never tolerate. France, in turn, was equally suspicious of England: it was believed that the English garrisons might at any moment surrender their towns to Spain, and when (in July) a Huguenot army was cut to pieces in endeavouring to relieve Mons, the lukewarmness of England became apparent.

The only reason why the French government had participated in the Flemish affair was that the Queen-Mother hoped, by seeming to identify the Huguenot with the national cause, to undermine the Guises and avert the

renewal of civil war. But now that England was seemingly playing double, her only salvation lay in a violent change of policy. It so happened that in August the Huguenots were massing in Paris, ostensibly for the celebration of the highly unpopular marriage of the King's sister to the Protestant Navarre, actually to exert a still greater control over the government. It was the opportunity for Catharine to act. On St. Bartholomew's eve she obtained her son's consent to an attack on Coligny, the murderer of Guise's father. The act was a signal for the letting loose of the Parisian mob. To the mass of the nation, and especially to Paris, the Huguenots were responsible for the atrocities of the civil wars and for influencing the Court against the faith and traditions of France: the rage of the people, restrained till now with the greatest difficulty, blazed forth in one of those periodical frenzies of the Gallic temperament at whatever it conceives to be a deliberate perversion of justice. Throughout the early hours of August 24 the madness continued to spread throughout Paris, and subsequently from Paris to the provinces. Catharine, who fired the train, had never conceived the depth of the indignation which the nation felt against her policy, nor could she have foreseen the fearful magnitude of the conflagration she had set alight. Massacre provoked counter-massacre and it has been estimated that as many as ten thousand perished.

The deed with all its fearful carnage proclaimed to the world that the French nation would never accept the revolution. Burghley till now had been seriously deceived by Walsingham, who had constantly assured him from Paris that the Huguenot was the winning cause. The massacre of St. Bartholomew changed all that. The Court, when the news arrived, was on progress. When the French ambassador was at length admitted to the Queen to make his official excuses, it was to a scene of carefully staged mourning and dry-eyed despondency.

Especially was the affair a reverse to Burghley's policy of allying with the French government against Spain:

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"We have great cause," he wrote, "in these times, to doubt all fair speakers, and therefore we do presently put all the sea-coasts in defence and mean to send her Majesty's navy to sea with speed, and so continue until we do see further whereunto to trust."

Actually, however, though the apparent *volte-face* of the French government seemed to ruin all Burghley's plans and suggest the necessity of returning once more to the support of Philip, the check was only temporary. Very soon Elizabeth was made to profess herself entirely satisfied with the Queen-Mother's explanations; and thenceforward, under cover of a superficial reconciliation with Spain, the gradual process of drawing closer to France was resumed.

§ 3.

One of Burghley's pre-eminent gifts was his ability to turn a reverse in one direction to an opportunity for advancing in another. The St. Bartholomew massacre could easily be represented as a source of future peril for Elizabeth, and by dwelling on this Burghley was able to move the Queen, as otherwise would have been impossible, to agreeing to the death of the Queen of Scots. Within a month of St. Bartholomew, Burghley had completed an arrangement with the Scottish Regent, Mar, whereby Mary was to be handed over to him and summarily murdered within four days of her crossing the border. Leicester was in the secret, and on the Scotch side Morton was specially earnest "touching the great matter." As in other similar dealings with the Scots, there was a financial side to the transaction: the English government were to provide the arrears of pay due to the Regent's army, and there was also to be an English force in attendance during the actual killing. "The matter of which you wot," as it was darkly referred to by Burghley's agent, Killigrew, "the only salve for the great sores of this commonwealth," would have been duly effected had not an unfortunate accident occurred at the critical moment. The

Regent unexpectedly died; and though Killigrew had been confident that the "great matter" would have proceeded just the same, the negotiations were suspended.

There had been very few cognisant of this little device, but somehow the secret would seem to have been betrayed. At any rate, in the following January we find Burghley in just indignation at the publication in Paris of a book which accused him of plotting Mary's death:

"As for my part, if I have any such malicious or malignant spirit, God presently so confound my body to ashes and my soul to perpetual torment in Hell."

But though the "great matter," so essential to Burghley's ends, had to be temporarily abandoned, he was able at least to bring about the final downfall of that party in Scotland which had all this time maintained the cause of Mary against the Regency. One after the other the Queen's adherents were bribed over to the Regent's side by Killigrew, till at last only Edinburgh Castle held out, under Kircaldy of Grange and Maitland. The late Secretary, once Burghley's man, had since Mary's imprisonment held out consistently for the cause of Scottish independence. No help was forthcoming from France, whereas a force under Drury was dispatched by Burghley with the necessary guns for reducing the Castle. Kircaldy, having surrendered to the English on condition that his life should be spared, was handed over to Morton to be hanged. Within a few days of the Castle's surrendering Maitland also died, and the cause of Mary in Scotland was finally lost.

§ 4.

With this decisive achievement it was possible, for a time, to rest content. The St. Bartholomew affair had ended any danger of France's intervention in the Netherlands: and if France was not intervening, neither need England. Therefore, since Orange and his party were just now providing

sufficient distraction for Philip, Burghley could afford to be conciliatory to Spain. The English volunteers in Flanders were ostentatiously withdrawn and negotiations were opened for resuming the disastrously suspended trade relations with the Spanish dominions. By the Convention of Bristol England agreed to restore the confiscated treasure to the bankers, and Philip for his part undertook to expel from Flanders the English college at Douai and the Catholic refugees in Louvain. Meanwhile the hated Alva had been replaced by a more conciliatory governor, Don Luis Requesens, who promised to remedy the political grievances of the Netherlanders if they would return to their religious obedience. Pending the ratification of the Convention of Bristol, Burghley agreed that nothing could be fairer.

It was at this moment that there must needs come butting in upon the happy reconciliation—"Monsieur"! The recent death of young Charles IX of France, had brought to the throne his brother, Anjou (Elizabeth's old suitor), as Henry III. The youngest brother, the little Alençon (he whose candidature for Elizabeth's hand had recently been of such importance to the Anglo-French *entente*) now succeeded to the title of Anjou. But for simplicity's sake one may refer to him, by his now semi-official title, as "Monsieur."

Now Monsieur, for reasons of his own, elected to be sympathetic to the Huguenots. When, therefore, in defiance of the French government, he placed himself at the head of his Protestant friends with the evident intention of making trouble, Burghley had reason to watch him narrowly. If Monsieur, with the young Protestant Henry of Navarre, was proposing to "start anything" in the French interest in Flanders, Burghley, on principle, would have to see that England participated. Meanwhile it was advisable to keep a check on Monsieur's ambitions by once more dangling before him the prospect of marrying Elizabeth.

Walsingham, who voiced the sentiments of the Puritans, had latterly grown cooler on the subject of Monsieur.

Nor, in truth, had he exaggerated when he wrote that "the gentleman, sure, is void of any good favour, besides the blemish of the small pocks." Still, in view of the present political exigencies, it might be wise to set off, against the gentleman's physical shortcomings, the spiritual advantage of his religious elasticity. Therefore, in case Walsingham had been over fastidious, inquiries were set on foot as to the precise depth and number of the alleged disfiguring pock-marks. But these investigations, as it happened, proved unnecessary; for, just as Monsieur seemed to be coming once more into favour as a suitor, he spoilt his chances by suddenly throwing over his Huguenot projects and making his peace with the Court. The danger of French interference in the Netherlands vanished, and with it Monsieur's own prospects of matrimony.

§ 5.

But there was presently to appear in the Netherlands a personage more disturbing than Monsieur. On the death of Requesens the governorship was entrusted to Don John of Austria, the victor of Lepanto. Don John had ambitions which touched Burghley nearly, for it was his alleged intention, after pacifying the Netherlands, to turn his attention to England, release and marry the captive Queen of Scots and place her triumphantly on the English throne.

It was a project appropriate to a hero of romance, but at present Don John was fully occupied with the immediate difficulties of his new office. A revolt of the Spanish garrison had led to the temporary union of Catholic Flanders with the northern Protestants under Orange, and together the rebellious states had offered themselves to the sovereignty of the Hapsburg Archduke, Matthias. Burghley found a generous subsidy for Matthias, redoubled his precautions for the guarding of Mary, and endeavoured to accentuate, as far as he could, Philip's jealousy of his ambitious half-brother. He was so far successful that Philip spoke of

replacing Don John by a governor less menacing. Also he restored to London a regular ambassador—the last he was ever to send—Don Bernardino de Mendoza. To the States, he informed Burghley, he was prepared to grant all their political demands, but not to tolerate the new religion. Burghley assured Mendoza that such conditions were perfectly reasonable, and as for the Queen: "if the terms offered were not accepted by the States, she herself would take arms against them."

Mendoza believed him. He was as slow as his predecessors in taking Burghley's measure. It was Leicester, Walsingham and the Puritans who were less amenable—"they being very much wedded to the States." It was *they* who were responsible for advancing funds to the rebels, "under cloak of religion, which Burghley cannot well oppose." Little did he realize at present that Burghley's real aims were identical with Leicester's. But Burghley was more subtle. Orange, he knew, would reject Philip's offer and continue his resistance to Spain. Why, therefore, should he show his hand, when by harmless dissimulation he could drive a wedge between Philip and the terrible Don John?

The thrusting of such a wedge was now more than ever desirable. Don John, with his able young uncle, Alexander of Parma, had made short work of the rebels under Matthias: If, in spite of English money and intrigue, they succeeded (as appeared likely) in suppressing the whole revolt, the young adventurer would no doubt proceed with the remainder of his programme. Then, just as the prospect was bleakest and Burghley's perturbation most acute, the situation was saved by the illness and sudden death of Don John. Gone was the danger of a speedy settlement of the Netherlands: perished the dream of releasing Mary and restoring England to the Catholic faith.

§ 6.

Burghley's relief was all the greater in view of a further complication of a nature wholly unexpected. On the ex-

tinction of Matthias, a new candidate had appeared for the Catholic sovereignty of the Netherlands—none other than the indefatigable Monsieur. If France insisted on having a finger in the Netherlands' pie, England could not stand aloof. Now the simplest means of keeping a hold on Monsieur, and at the same time foiling any dangerous understanding between France and Spain, was to revive, yet again, the project of a marriage to Elizabeth.

Such were the circumstances in which (in the summer of 1578) there began that amazing courtship between Monsieur and the Queen of England. The lady, at the time, was in the neighbourhood of five-and-forty, of wizened countenance, and with a towering red wig to conceal a head that was totally bald. Her lover was nearly twenty years younger, dwarfish in stature, and of almost preternatural ugliness. When Walsingham had said of him that he was "void of any good favour," he had spoken with courtly delicacy. The blemish, for instance, of the "small pocks" was as nothing in comparison with that of which Walsingham omitted all mention: a nose of shape and dimensions phenomenal—practically two noses, for the unfortunate organ was divided by a cleft down the centre. The mystical Flemings had perceived a fantastic symbolism in this nose: *Faut deux nez à double visage*: to one so double-faced in religion and politics, two noses were only appropriate.

But though admittedly the little fellow was far from prepossessing, if he were determined to dabble in Franco-Flemish politics, something drastic had to be done to control him. He rose to the bait immediately. Relinquishing obediently his immediate projects in the Netherlands, at the beginning of the new year he dispatched to England his envoy, Jean Simier, to make love by proxy to his adored but elderly mistress.

Elizabeth, from the moment of Simier's appearance, began to throw herself with zest into the new part that her minister had allotted her. Simier was charming. He paid his representational addresses to her with a realism wholly

French; and the Queen, combining business with pleasure, had the satisfaction of obeying the Lord Treasurer's behests and at the same time enjoying a delightful, not to say scandalous flirtation with this very amusing young Frenchman.

But as month succeeded month, Simier's master grew tiresomely impatient. Matters were developing in the Netherlands. Thanks to the diplomacy of Alexander of Parma and the religious incompatibilities of the rebels, a cleavage had occurred between the southern and northern states: the former had come to terms with Alexander; the latter, adhering to Orange, by the Union of Utrecht declared finally their political independence.

In the circumstances, Monsieur can hardly be blamed for wanting to know where he stood. In August, therefore, as Simier seemed to be achieving no practical results, he slipped over to England and presented himself in person—small pocks, double nose and all—to the gaze of his astonished mistress.

The result was what no one, not even Burghley, could have foreseen. Elizabeth was enraptured. It would scarcely be accurate to say she fell in love with him—love, in the ordinary sense, was a passion unknown to her; but all the curiously perverted affection she had displayed towards favourites like Leicester and Hatton was now lavished, and with an ardour far more intense, on this wierdly hideous little dwarf. Simier, her “ape,” was instantly relegated to the background, and in his place this extraordinary little creature, his master, basked ecstatically in the Queen's caresses. She petted and fondled him in the sight of all, addressed him endearingly as her “little frog,” and (when he eventually withdrew) pursued him eagerly with scores of passionate love-letters.

This, in Burghley's eyes, seemed to be going a little too far: much too far, in the opinion of Leicester and Walsingham. Since Monsieur, at the moment, was posing as a Catholic, English Protestant opinion was seriously alarmed. The Council, coldly disapproving, would take no respon-

sibility, one way or the other. If the Queen, as she tearfully protested, was really bent on the marriage—well, she would have to marry him. But Heaven only knew what the consequences might be! Burghley alone was calm. He knew very well that all the Queen wanted was to keep her little frog by her as a new kind of domestic pet. His absence seemed utterly intolerable to her. But when it came to the point of marrying him—she would never do it.

Meanwhile the comedy could be allowed to proceed. It was holding the French alliance and preventing interference in Flanders. A fool of a misguided Puritan, John Stubbs, had discovered, in a mischievous pamphlet, *A Gaping Gulph, wherein England is like to be swallowed up by another French marriage, if the Lord forbid not the banns by letting her see the sin and punishment thereof*. Burghley saw to it that the author should quickly be shown his own sin in the matter by the chopping off of his offending hand. That done, the Queen was allowed to have her way. A draft agreement was settled, of which the articles were to remain in suspense for a couple of months, "during which time the Queen hopes to have brought her people to consent. If before that time she did not write consenting to receive ambassadors for the conclusion of the treaty, the whole of the condition would be void."

Thus Burghley concluded his cold summary of this romantic episode down to Simier's departure in November. He also kept copies of Elizabeth's letters to her "*treschere grenouille*," endorsed them "No. 1," "No. 4," "No. 17," and so forth, and carefully filed them among his papers.

III

"THE EXECUTION OF JUSTICE"

§ 1.

THE two months passed and the agreement might have been considered at an end. Actually neither Burghley nor Elizabeth had yet seen the last of the Little Frog, but for the moment he was overshadowed by matters of more pressing importance—in Scotland, in Ireland and in England itself.

Since the death of Mar, the Scottish regency had been occupied by the stalwart Morton, joint murderer of Rizzio and Darnley and at all times staunch for the Cause. Yet the general situation was none too good. The young King James was rapidly growing up and had fallen of late under the influence of a new arrival in Scotland, his cousin Esmé Stuart (d'Aubigny), whom he created Earl of Lennox. Now Lennox's aims were strongly suspected in England. While professing to be a convert to Protestantism, he was manifestly plotting against Morton, whose support, both from the King and the Kirk, was already weakening. It was known that Spain had sinister designs on Scotland—perhaps in conjunction with Guise: what more probable, therefore, than that Lennox's arrival formed part of a general conspiracy?

Simultaneously Ireland was again giving trouble. The scheme (of which Burghley tentatively approved) for solving the Irish problem by settling the land with English colonists had been proceeding steadily, to the necessary accompaniment of wholesale confiscations and massacre. But since the beginning of the reign the character of the Irish resistance had been gradually changing: from being a

spasmodic affair of rebellious clans, it was approaching gradually the nature of a national revolt. Proportionately, the cause of Irish Catholicism was becoming more and more identified with the cause of resistance to the English. This new development had been unmistakable when in the previous year (July, 1579) a Papal expedition had landed in Ireland, to claim (in virtue of Elizabeth's deposition) the country's political allegiance to the Holy See. Originally it was to have been led by that naval adventurer, Sir Thomas Stucley; but Stucley's Catholic zeal had been diverted against the Moors, and his place was taken by Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald. The Pope himself was represented by his Legate, Dr. Nicholas Saunders, sometime Fellow of New College and a redoubtable Catholic controversialist. Fitzmaurice was joined by his cousin, Desmond Fitzgerald, and Ireland was in open rebellion. The affair was still raging fiercely when Burghley was confronted by a danger more insidious at home.

§ 2.

It has already been indicated that the founding of the seminary at Douai (removed later to Reims), and the sending thence of missionaries to England, had inaugurated an entirely new phase in the religious struggle. Henceforward the only possible defence of the Protestant settlement was a rigorous persecution of the old religion. To effect this, Burghley had provided himself with temporary machinery in the penal act of 1571, and he had already begun to employ it. The first of a long series of victims had been a young seminary priest, Cuthbert Mayne, who had been taken in a gentleman's house in Cornwall. He was charged, under the new act, with saying Mass and reconciling the Queen's subjects to Catholicism—actions which, in accordance with Burghley's scheme of persecution, were to be henceforth regarded as treason. The jury were so unpatriotic as to want to acquit him; but it happened that the sheriff was none other than the hero of Tennyson's *Revenge*—the

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superman who in his fits of rage was in the habit of munching glass. On this occasion he alleviated his feelings in more practical fashion by bursting in upon the empanelled jury and rating them into proper compliance. Mayne was in due course hanged and disembowelled, and Grenville (for this notable exploit) received his knighthood.

But the summer of 1580 was disturbed by an event which brought the question of the proselytizing priests into far greater prominence. This was the arrival from Rome of a special Papal mission under the Jesuit, Robert Parsons. It had been at the urgent request of Dr. Allen that the Society of Jesus had agreed to co-operate in the English enterprise, and then only on the express condition that its work of spiritual ministration was not to be associated with any political intrigue. There was even obtained from Rome an official declaration that, as circumstances stood, the Bull of Deposition was not binding on English subjects.

Parsons, who was the first to arrive in England, was followed shortly after by an even more formidable subordinate, the famous Edmund Campion. After a distinguished career at Oxford, Campion had relinquished his fellowship at St. John's—as late, it is interesting to note, as 1569—tardily convinced of the heretical nature of the State Church in which he had taken orders. Making his way, eventually, to Rome, he had been received into the Society of Jesus, afterwards passing his novitiate in Germany. Fluent of speech, a scholar and a wit, with a winning charm of manner, yet of an iron resolution and courage, Campion was marked out by nature for the difficult work of the English mission. And the hopes that were entertained of him were speedily fulfilled. He had scarcely joined his superior in London when the country was ringing with his extraordinary exploits. His personality seemed irresistible. Passing in the most improbable disguises from county to county, preaching and administering the sacraments, he was said to be withdrawing thousands from their membership of the National Church. Not content with this, the mission

had somewhere a secret printing-press, through which Campion had the audacity to publish a reasoned defence of the old religion. The work was circulated everywhere: it even appeared at Oxford, at the beginning of term, prominently displayed in the University Church! Clearly unless something were done quickly the Protestant settlement was doomed.

§ 3.

Indeed it almost seemed that a crisis was approaching similar to that of ten years before. Lennox was engineering a counter-revolution in Scotland: the Pope's Spanish and Italian adventurers had Ireland in revolt: in England the Jesuit mission was seducing the people—not indeed from their political allegiance to the Queen, but what to Burghley was equally serious—from their allegiance to the State religion.

And in the background was always Spain. Daily the logically inevitable conflict was drawing nearer: and the party of Leicester and Walsingham were rashly doing everything to precipitate it. With Mary still alive and Ireland in rebellion; with a hostile faction growing dominant in Scotland and with disaffection alarmingly on the increase at home, open war with Spain would have spelt utter disaster.

Yet how was peace to be maintained? In the summer of this year the death of the old Cardinal King of Portugal led to the annexation (as had been foreseen) of that State and its colonies by Spain. France and the extreme Protestants in England were for distracting Philip by making of Portugal "another Netherlands." They had a "pretender" to support in the bastard Don Antonio, and within a month of Philip's seizing upon Portugal, Antonio's emissaries were in England, intriguing with Leicester and Walsingham. Such a policy in existing circumstances was madness, yet Burghley had to strain every effort to frustrate this project of Portuguese intervention.

On the top of this came another embarrassment: the

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return of Francis Drake from his famous voyage round the world. A kinsman of honest John Hawkins, Drake had started his career in the slave line also; but to recoup himself for his losses at the hands of Spain he had presently taken to specialize systematically in piracy. Since at any time the English government might find it opportune to conciliate Spain by hanging him, his obvious policy was flatly opposed to Burghley's, that is to say, it was to his interest to embroil the two countries in such a way as to make any reconciliation impossible. In this he was abetted by the Leicester-Walsingham group at Court, who secretly won over the Queen also, by appealing frankly to her greed. So it was that three years previously Drake had been presented by Walsingham to the Queen and had submitted a scheme for an extended piratical raid in the Indies: one which might be expected to return her a heavy profit on capital outlay, with the minimum of personal risk to herself. Elizabeth had been readily persuaded, but as Drake himself records: "her Majesty gave me special commandment that of all men my Lord Treasurer should not know it."

But my Lord Treasurer, as she might have known, was a man who made it his business to know things, and it had not been long before he learnt about this. To stop the expedition altogether would have been difficult; and Burghley, as usual, preferred a method more oblique. He saw to it that a mysterious gentleman called Doughty should sail with the expedition as his own secret agent, with instructions (apparently) to frustrate the object of the voyage at whatever cost to himself. The method to which Doughty eventually had recourse was the incitement of the crews to mutiny, and (as Drake himself believed) the employment of witchcraft to cause unfavourable winds. If so, it was an added subtlety in Burghley to employ a dabbler in the black arts for the achievement of so delicate a task. But it availed him nothing. Doughty was promptly hanged, and the expedition proceeded on its nefarious course. As complaints came in of Drake's plundering and sacking in

the Pacific, Burghley realized that something must have gone wrong; and now, in September, 1580, he had the mortification of seeing the culprit return in triumph and receive the honour of knighthood from his gratified sovereign.

This was the kind of thing that made Burghley despair. The Spanish complaints were eminently just: if he had had his own way, Drake would have had a very different reception. To Mendoza's demands for punishment, the only answer he could make was to raise the question of Philip's participation in the Papal raid on Ireland; but in the Council he could at least insist that the stolen treasure should be conveyed to the Tower and an inventory made with a view to its restitution. Restitution? Well, at any rate the *possibility* of restitution could be kept in view: it was the single diplomatic asset that had resulted from the voyage; and of that, at any rate, he would make the most.

§ 4.

The increasing danger of open war, due mainly to the silly greed of the Queen and the fatuity of Leicester and Walsingham, made it more than ever necessary to keep in with France and persevere once more with the projected marriage with Monsieur; and Monsieur being still nominally a Catholic, it was all the more necessary to propitiate the Puritans by a fresh offensive against the Catholics at home. It was in these circumstances, and while the alarming activities of Campion and his fellows were still at their height, that Parliament met again in January, 1581.

The time was most suitable for a direct attack on the Pope:

"You see," explained the government, "how he hath lately sent hither a sort of Hypocrites, naming themselves Jesuits, a rabble of vagrant friars, newly sprung up, running through the world to trouble the Church of God."

Burghley had with his own hand drafted a new bill to deal with the emergency. Having been introduced thus

eloquently by Mildmay, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it passed triumphantly through both Houses. Reconciliation to the Church of Rome was again declared treasonable and the fine for non-attendance at Protestant worship was raised to the crushing sum of £20 a month. This, it was hoped, would be an adequate counterpoise to Campion's efforts and facilitate dealing with Campion himself, as soon as that arch-traitor should be apprehended.

But Campion was surprisingly elusive. Passing with incredible secrecy from one part of the country to another, he continued his amazing work of preaching and stiffening resistance to the established religion. Month after month he defied capture; but it could not be for much longer. The ranks of the Catholics were penetrated by purchasable traitors, and the government manfully persevered. At last, after so many failures, the joyful news reached Burghley that the wicked Jesuit had been taken in Berkshire, betrayed by one who had just been serving his Mass.

The Council made the most of their triumph. Ignominiously pinioned, Campion was ridden through the jeering London mob to the Tower, where he was imprisoned in "Little Ease" and repeatedly racked. Torture drew nothing from him; but it was a shrewdly Cecilian device to give out that under examination he had basely betrayed his confederates. A device, equally Cecilian (and one that recalls the famous Westminster conference of the beginning of the reign), was to stage a mock debate between the prisoner under arrest and certain divines of the Established Church. The latter, carefully primed, carried out their task with truculent satisfaction—to the extent, perhaps, of letting their zeal exceed their discretion; for the meek demeanour of their opponent, unprepared as he was, broken by the rack and his memory failing him, aroused unexpected sympathy among the anything but friendly audience.

It would have been the most satisfactory solution of all if Campion could have been prevailed on to recant; consequently the government spared no pains in attempting to

bribe him into submission. Such a procedure, in dealing with one who was nominally a political traitor, might be open to criticism on the score of logic; but there are considerations more important for a statesman than logic. What Campion was endangering was not the throne or the constitution, but the Protestant Church established by Parliament. The issue was essentially religious: hence, if the redoubtable Campion could be induced to renounce his faith—and the government had already given out that he had done so—his apostacy would prove far more effective than his execution. But Campion would not recant—a fact it presently became useless to conceal.

The only question, therefore, that remained, was that of the most effective procedure for killing him. It was perfectly feasible, by the recently passed law, to indict him as a priest and therefore a traitor. But his exploits had made such a stir, his very audacity had aroused such sympathy, that it was considered unwise, in his particular case, to adopt a course which, though legal, savoured so much of religious persecution. Besides, not only did he profess personal allegiance to the Queen, but he also claimed that English subjects generally were dispensed from observing the Bull of Deposition.

But in the end the difficulty was surmounted. What could be simpler than the concoction of a fictitious plot, supposedly devised at Reims and Rome, *to dethrone and assassinate the Queen*? Parsons, unfortunately, had evaded arrest; but any odd priests at the moment in custody could be associated with Campion in the charge. The necessary witnesses could easily be suborned. It would matter very little if they contradicted each other—as they did—or if they had never been in Rome or Reims in their lives. The jury could be trusted to find a verdict of guilty, and Campion would be condemned, not for exercising his functions as a priest—certainly not!—but for his “devilish conspiracy” to murder the Queen.

It all worked out as Burghley and his friends had planned.

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The farcical trial was duly staged; the witnesses perjured themselves, and the jury did all that was required of them.

Campion was executed at Tyburn that December. Afterwards, when his mutilated remains were examined, it was found that his patient examiners, in their quest for truth, had gone to the length of tearing out his finger-nails.

§ 5.

In the consciousness of his own moral rectitude, it was one of Burghley's most poignant regrets that people were for ever misinterpreting his actions. As he once wrote to Parker—the Archbishop, not the spy—when he had been the victim of a particularly virulent attack: “If God and our consciences were not our Defence and Consolation against these pestilential darts, we might well be weary of our lives.” It was to disarm such malignities, as well as to publish (as was his practice) a reasoned defence of the government's action, that he issued, during the following month, a carefully considered statement, entitled:

The Execution of Justice in England for maintenance of publique and Christian peace, against certaine Stirrers of Sedition, and Adherents of the Traitors and Enemies of the Realme, without any persecution of them for Questions of Religion, as is falsely reported and published by the Fautors and Fosterers of their Treasons.

He even condescended to make a formal defence against the unjust imputation that the government had been guilty of inhumanity in their means of extorting confessions.¹ Campion, he pointed out, was never so racked but that he could presently walk and write: witness the signature to his confession. Only those were racked who refused to answer plainly, who were known to be guilty or who out of misguided sentiments of charity refused to betray their

¹ A Declaration of the favourable Dealing of her Majesty's Commissioners appointed for the Examination of certain Traitors and of Tortures unjustly reported to be done upon them for Matter of Religion. 1583.

companions. The examiners, moreover, had been charged to use the rack "in as charitable a manner as such a thing might be,"¹ hence, so far from it being true that sharpness and cruelty had been used "to those" (such as Campion, for instance) "against whom nothing can be cruel," in actual fact nothing at all had been done "but gentle and merciful."

Yet such was the malice of the great minister's enemies that the ablest of apologies would not silence them. Dr. Allen, in particular, launched a violent attack upon him in his *True, Sincere and Modest Defence of English Catholics that suffer for the Faith both at home and abroad against a false, seditious and slanderous libel, entitled "The Execution of Justice in England."* If the English Catholics (he declared in his peroration)

"might have had either by licence or connivance in never so few places of the realm, never so secretly, never so inoffensively, the exercise of that faith and religion which all our forefathers since our country was converted, lived and died in: if they might have obtained any piece of that liberty which Catholics enjoy in Germany, Switzerland or other places among Protestants; or half the freedom that the Huguenots have in France and other countries, yea or but so much courtesy as the Christians find among the very Turks, or very Jews among Christians . . . our adversaries should never have been troubled nor put in jealousy of so many men's malcontentment at home, nor stand in doubt of the disposition and allegiance of so great a number of nobility and powerful gentlemen abroad."

Eloquent, but beside the point. "That state could never be in safety," runs one of Burghley's dicta, "where there was toleration of two religions." He himself was so broad-

¹ E.g. the famous Richard Topcliffe, whom Burghley permitted to erect a specially effective rack in his own house for the torturing of priests. For a consideration, Topcliffe would undertake to torture his victim to death.

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minded that he had conformed without scruples of conscience to extreme Protestantism under Edward VI and to decorous Catholicism under Mary. The particular form of religion he had for his own reasons imposed on the Queen and nation was one which commended itself to very few; but in his own eyes it was as good as any other, and because it had the authority of the State he considered it only reasonable that all the Queen's subjects should conform to it as he himself had conformed to Popery and Calvinism. It is at first sight rather surprising to read at the head of the score of maxims which guided his life and conduct:

"In all things, *primum querite Regnum Cælorum*," but the interpretation of the paradox may be discovered in the injunction to his son in the last letter he ever wrote with his own hand:

"Serve God by serving the Queene, for all other service is indeed bondage to the devil."

The plea that what was rendered to Cæsar was not necessarily rendered to God was always entirely meaningless to him. So too was that of Campion at his trial:

"In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors, all the ancient priests, bishops and kings—all that was once the glory of England, the island of saints and the most devoted child of the see of Peter. For what have we taught, however you may qualify it with the odious name of treason, that they did not uniformly teach? To be condemned with these old lights, not of England only but of the world, by their degenerate descendants is both gladness and glory to us. God lives; posterity will live; their judgment is not so liable to corruption as that of those who are now going to torture us to death."

Whatever the ultimate verdict of their posterity in the issue between Burghley and Campion, the victory in that generation lay with Burghley, and it was a victory very long enduring.

IV

EXIT THE LITTLE FROG

WHEN Campion had been sentenced an attempt was made to obtain a reprieve by appealing to an Important Personage at Whitehall. The Important Personage was discovered playing tennis, a tiny little man with an enormous nose. He patiently listened to the petition and appeared to give the matter a few moment's thought; then he abruptly turned his back and applied himself once more to the game.

It was the Little Frog again!

The project for his marriage, it will be remembered, had been continued almost without interruption since his former visit. In the previous January he had so far committed himself in the Netherlands as to accept formally the sovereignty of the revolting Provinces, and in April Burghley was expensively entertaining a special embassy from France at Cecil House. The problem still presented difficulties:

"Since the treaty with Simier," runs a memorandum endorsed by Burghley, "many accidents have happened to make this marriage hateful to the people, as the invasion of Ireland by the Pope, the determination of the Pope to stir up rebellion in this realm by sending in a number of English Jesuits, who have by books, challenges and secret instructions and seductions procured a great defection of many people to relinquish their obedience to her Majesty. Likewise there is a manifest practice in Scotland by d'Aubigny to alienate the young King of Scotland, both from favouring the Protestant religion, and from amity to her Majesty and her realm, notwithstanding that he hath only been conserved at her Majesty's charges."

All the same, Burghley (as against Walsingham and Leicester) was in favour of the negotiations proceeding. It was important to bring the Queen-mother of France to the point of openly breaking with Spain, for that would defer still longer the inevitable conflict with Philip. But the French ambassadors had reason to be cautious where England was concerned, and they insisted on making an alliance dependent on the marriage of Elizabeth to Monsieur. In the end they had to be content to depart with nothing better than another draft agreement, and the warning that the marriage still ultimately depended on the personal relations between the contracting parties.

Meanwhile Monsieur had to be carefully watched. Having taken Cambrai he found himself so low in funds that he might at any moment go over to the Guises. Twenty thousand pounds had to be dispatched to encourage him; and, to persuade the French that England was seriously contemplating a breach with Spain, it was necessary to make a show of negotiating in London with the Portuguese pretender Don Antonio.

But sooner or later the hollowness of the proposed marriage was bound to be made apparent. How, then, to break it off without mortally offending France? It was on this delicate mission that Walsingham himself was dispatched to Paris. He was making great headway—the only real obstacle being Elizabeth's reluctance to pay for her release in cash—when Monsieur must needs announce his intention of popping over again to England. Pop over he did in November.

Elizabeth, in all docility, had asked for Burghley's instructions:

"Let me know," she had written, "what you wish me to do."

Burghley told her, and she carried out his orders with enthusiasm. Monsieur was received with royal honours; the Queen publicly kissed him; the happy pair were solemnly affianced.

Burghley himself was not at Court to witness this interesting ceremony:

"Blessed be the Lord," he exclaimed when he heard of it, "that this business has at last reached a point where the Queen, on her part, has done all she can; it is for the country now alone to carry it out."

What the country had to do "to carry it out" was to impose such impossible conditions that the French would be forced to break off themselves without impeaching Elizabeth's honour.

Matters having reached this happy conclusion, the sooner Monsieur saw fit to take himself off the better for everyone concerned. But Monsieur refused to budge, and the Queen (whose curious passion for the little fellow was expressing itself in the usual fashion) seemed equally reluctant to part with him. She insisted on first hearing from his mother; but Catharine was obstinately compliant. She would agree to anything—even to her son's declaring himself openly a Protestant. Burghley came to the rescue by proposing the surrender of Calais and Le Havre as security for the fulfilment of the French engagements. That, he was convinced, would never be conceded; but still Monsieur refused to go. As a last resort they determined to appeal to his honour—Monsieur's honour demanded that he should return to his people in their heroic struggle for liberty.

The appeal was unexpectedly successful. The Queen, in mingled relief and regret, was for promising him the sum of £60,000. Too much, thought Burghley: an altogether impossible amount. Her Majesty explained that she was only *promising*: Burghley understood perfectly—that was a very different thing. In the end, with £25,000 on account, he was packed off in the company of the unwilling Leicester with fifteen ships to escort him.

What followed was a fiasco. No sooner was he crowned than the French government repudiated him, leaving Elizabeth with the whole responsibility. In her rage, she cursed Leicester for having been present at the coronation and

Walsingham for his policy of interference. She had never wanted to part with her Little Frog at all. Supposing he were killed! In a panic she was for bringing him back; but that, as Walsingham maliciously pointed out, would mean marrying him!

Burghley, for his part, thought the best thing to be done now was to let Monsieur go to the devil by himself. And Monsieur proceeded to do so. Chafing against the restrictions imposed on him by his new subjects, he attempted a *coup d'état*; miserably failing, he opened negotiations with the Spaniard and returned disappointed to France. In a little over a year he was dead.

So perished the "Little Frog." His last message to Elizabeth had been as ardent as ever—"avecque autant d'affection que je me souhet vostre mari couché entre deus dras dedans vos beaus bras." The letter, like the rest, is endorsed by Burghley.

V

PLOTS THICKENING

§ 1.

THE termination of the affair with Monsieur had necessitated a redoubling of caution at home, especially in regard to the captive Scottish Queen, who was known to be the focus of those sinister designs in Scotland. Morton, the staunchest friend of the English government, had been imprisoned by the scheming d'Aubigny, and eventually executed for the very crime which was the basis of his attack on Mary—complicity in the murder of Darnley. Now, under d'Aubigny's influence, the young King of Scots was falling under the sway of the Jesuits: a Catholic reaction was anticipated and a project set on foot for associating James with his mother as joint rulers of the realm. To counteract this project, the English government reopened negotiations with Mary for her release on such conditions as would stultify the schemes of d'Aubigny; but Spain was also involved in the Scottish project, and on Mendoza's advice the Queen of Scots ultimately refused the offers of Elizabeth. A few weeks later the situation in Scotland was reversed by the Protestant raid of Ruthven: d'Aubigny had to leave the kingdom and James fell back into the power of the anti-Catholic faction.

The Ruthven raid led to a drastic revision of the Spanish programme. Philip, least offensive of monarchs, had been driven against his will to prepare for war with England. The damage to his trade by piracy, the secret support from England which made it impossible to restore order in the Netherlands, combined (as Burghley had feared) to leave him no alternative but war. Under the d'Aubigny régime

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it appeared that Scotland would be the likeliest base of operations: now that d'Aubigny had fallen, the attack would have to be made by a direct invasion of England in concert with a Catholic rising. The upshot of Campion's peaceful mission had convinced Parsons and Allen that the only way to restore the old religion in England was by the destruction of the Elizabethan government. The Duke of Guise was ready to take command of the invasion, and owing to the enmity between him and the court of France, Spain considered it safe to co-operate.

Mendoza in London was the co-ordinating factor between the various principals—Guise, Allen, and Mary's two agents in Paris, Morgan and Paget. But an important, though subordinate, link was young Francis Throgmorton, a nephew of Burghley's old ambassador (now dead), but unlike his uncle, a Catholic. It was Throgmorton's modest function to receive communications from abroad at his house in London and transmit them thence to their proper destinations.

But Throgmorton was being watched and his suspicious visits to Mendoza had been noted.

Walsingham had been seeing to that. Since his taking over of the Secretaryship he had spared no pains in his perfecting of the secret service. It was the one department in which the government's expenditure was lavish, and the number of spies and secret agents had grown to the proportions of a small army. More than once already Walsingham had shown his deftness and resource in collecting and dealing with evidence, and crude though he was as a politician, in an affair of this sort he was so obviously in his element that Burghley knew he could trust him implicitly.

Throgmorton, therefore, after being carefully shadowed, was arrested. The more incriminating of his papers he had been able to get rid of or destroy, and on the rack he was disappointingly reticent; but presently a simple device brought everything to light. He was assured officially that,

whatever he might have been guilty of, he could not be proceeded against, as the Act of 1571 required that the indictment should be laid within six months of the committing of the offence. That time having now elapsed he would be safe in admitting all. Throgmorton accordingly confessed—the meaning of the plans of harbours found in his possession, the complicity of Guise and Mendoza. Then, to his surprise, he was proceeded against and condemned, not indeed by the act of 1571, but by the ordinary law of treason. Discovering, too late, that he had been tricked, he repudiated his admissions as having been made on the understanding that he was to be released. This was unfortunate, as it was always as well, for purposes of propaganda, to have a signed confession for publication. He was therefore secretly promised his life if he acknowledged his treason in writing. At this he signed what was required—and was then hanged, disembowelled and quartered. It was a pretty little device and one that confirmed the high opinion Burghley had already formed of his subordinate.

But though he could not withhold his admiration at the manner in which the affair had been conducted, from the diplomatic point of view it was most regrettable. The revelations of Throgmorton left no alternative to the Government but to expel the Spanish ambassador; and the expulsion of Mendoza, in the circumstances, was tantamount to a declaration of war—the very thing that for twenty-five years Burghley had been doing his utmost to avert.

The events of the summer still further played into the hands of Leicester and Walsingham. The death of Monsieur made the Protestant Henry of Navarre the heir apparent to the French throne, and he would be sure to have the support of the Queen-Mother if Guise continued his intrigues with Spain. Secondly, the outlawry of Orange as a traitor had at last borne fruit: the Prince was assassinated at Delft, and with him perished the soul of the Netherlands revolt. Either Spain was to be allowed to crush the Protestant

rebels, or England must throw off the mask and take the lead in a religious confederacy.

The case being presented thus, there was clearly no alternative to war. The Lord Treasurer, when consulted, drew up one of his balanced lists of pros and cons, but this time manifestly the pros predominated. The inevitable he had so long dreaded had come to pass.

And yet, as his memorandum piously concludes:

"Si Deus nobiscum, quis contra nos?"

§ 2.

"God with us—who against us?"

That was all very well; but it was very doubtful if the Almighty's favour could be relied on as long as Mary of Scots remained alive. It was not Burghley's fault that she was still living. Sooner or later the war had to come, and it could never be safely engaged on till Mary was put out of the way. It was for this reason that he had striven so hard to preserve peace. But now that war was virtually declared, it was imperative that the Queen of Scots should die: in this Burghley was entirely at one with his colleagues Walsingham and Leicester. The only question was how best to compass her death.

The murder of the outlawed Orange seemed to suggest the germ of an idea. Assassination was the obvious solution; but who would venture upon it without a formal censure of outlawry? And that the Queen would never pronounce. Suppose, however, a free "Association" were formed for the protection of the Queen's person—there could hardly be any objection to that. For such a spontaneous expression of loyalty it would not even be necessary to ask the Queen's permission.

The project was duly launched. All loyal subjects were invited to join, binding themselves "to revenge to the uttermost all such malicious actions and attempts against

her Majesty's most Royal Person"; and that, not merely upon the plotters themselves, but upon any in whose favour such a plot should have been formed. It was a brilliant move. Obviously everyone insisted on joining—who would dare do otherwise? Even Mary herself offered to subscribe: she was naturally refused: didn't she realize that the whole scheme was directed against no one but herself?

The great Association thus formed—and out of so many enrolled surely someone would have the courage to do what was wanted—all that remained was to obtain a legal sanction for it by statute.

It was for this purpose, mainly, that Parliament met in the following November. In a matter of such moment, even more care than usual was taken to secure a docile majority in the Commons: the event proved that such a precaution was not unnecessary. The draft of the Association Bill duly enjoined that all her Highness' subjects might lawfully

"by all forcible and possible means pursue to death every such wicked person, by whom or by whose means, assent or privity any such invasion or rebellion shall be in form aforesaid denounced to have been made, or such wicked act attempted, or other thing compassed or imagined against Her Majesty's person."

and furthermore that

"every such person by or for whom any such act shall be executed and their issues, being any wise assenting or privy to the same, shall be excluded and disabled for ever to have or claim . . . the said crown of this realm."

But with the best intentions in the world the Commons were by no means unanimous about the proposal, and it was very soon clear that the bill would never get through before Christmas.

What was still more surprising was an incident that attended the debate on a fresh penal measure—*Against*

Jesuits, seminary priests and such other like disobedient persons. The bill represented yet a further stage in Burghley's strategical plan of strangling the seminaries abroad and spiritually starving out the Catholic religion in England. All English Jesuits and seminarists remaining in England after forty days were to be proceeded against as traitors: English students or priests abroad were to return to the country within six months and recant their faith by taking the oath of Supremacy—otherwise to incur the penalties of treason.

There seemed nothing in the bill to which anyone could reasonably take exception, and the faithful Commons were proceeding to give it their unqualified assent when they were startled by an amazing tirade from the new member for Queenborough, Dr. William Parry. So far from loyally acquiescing in the government's measure, Dr. Parry had the impudence to denounce it as "full of blood, danger and despair to English subjects, and pregnant with fines and forfeitures which would go to enrich not the Queen, but private individuals." Scarcely believing its ears, the House committed the disloyal member to the Sergeant-at-arms. The following day he was released by order of the Queen, and so the session ended.

§ 3.

But the Parry incident was by no means closed, and to form an opinion of what followed it is necessary to review the antecedents of this mysterious personage.

A native of Wales and of gentle birth, he had received some grounding in the law and been employed by the late Earl of Pembroke. On that nobleman's death he had passed to the service of the Queen, being presently employed by Burghley as one of his regular spies. Within a few years he was continually in correspondence with the Lord Treasurer about "matters of importance," and such was Burghley's personal confidence in Parry that he specially recommended to him his young nephew, Antony Bacon, when the latter was visiting Paris. Thenceforward Parry's

letters become more frequent than ever. In one, typical of the rest, he writes encouragingly:

"I do finde my credite and fav^{or} to be such with the best of the English and Scottish nations in Rome and Paris (by the hope conceived of my redyness and abylyty to serve theym) that I doubt not within a few monethes to be well able to discover the depest practises."

This letter is dated May 1, 1580. By the end of the year he was back in England and in trouble for assaulting one of his creditors in the Temple. Thanks to Burghley's influence the matter was put right for him, and in July 1582 he set off again for Paris on a secret mission. But his relations with the government were becoming suspected by the English refugees abroad. He went through the form of being reconciled to the Church, but even so failed to win their complete confidence. He was more fortunate in Italy, whither he betook himself that winter to perform a task that he described as "dangerous and not very honourable." His real object was to obtain from Rome, if possible from the Pope himself, a written authorization for the murder of Queen Elizabeth. To this end he wrote from Venice to the Cardinal of Como, who was thought to be favourable to projects of such a nature. The Cardinal's reply was not entirely satisfactory, but being content with the impression he had made in high ecclesiastical circles in Italy, Parry returned in the following summer to Lyons, whence he reported to Burghley:

"Yf I be not deceived I have shaken the foundaen of the English semynay in Rheyms and utterly overthrowen the credite of the English pensioners in Rome. My instrumeⁿ were such as passe for grate, honourable and grave. The course was extraordinary and strange, reasonably well devised, soundly followed and substantially executed, without ye assistance of any one of the English nation."

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From Lyons he moved to Paris, where on the strength (apparently) of his correspondence with Como he regained the confidence of the faction there, especially of Paget and Morgan. Through them he was introduced to the Papal Nuncio, Ragazzoni, whom he persuaded to forward his suit to the Pope that he might receive a plenary indulgence for an important enterprise "full of danger":

"And I undertake it," he wrote, "for the public good and the peace of the whole of Christendom, for the restitution of the Kingdom of England to the ancient obedience to the Apostolic See, and for the liberation of the Queen of Scotland, the only true and undoubted Catholic heiress of the Crown of England, from her long and weary sufferings."

But Ragazzoni was suspicious of Parry. In the covering letter which he sent with Parry's to the Cardinal of Como he warns him that "the writer is all too well known. Here his reputation is certainly bad." But there was nothing to take exception to in the letter itself: not a word was contained in it on the subject of assassination; and Como in his reply observed that "no harm is done in giving him confidence *so long as he does not pass to something else.*" Under the same date (January 30, 1584) the Cardinal forwarded to Parry himself the plenary indulgence he had asked for, but the services for which it was granted were referred to in terms as vague as Parry's own.

Meanwhile Parry, confident of his success, had not waited in Paris for the reply to his request, but hurrying over to London had presented himself immediately at the Court and in an audience with the Queen laid bare the existence of a plot to kill her; in it (he said), among others, Paget and Morgan were involved. At the same time, to allay the suspicions of those in Paris, he wrote to Morgan to inform him that on taking further advice he found his conscience would not permit him to do the deed he had undertaken.

But his supreme achievement he had still to show. At

the end of March, Como's letter at length arrived and with it the indulgence. Proudly sending it to Burghley, he proclaimed that it had been granted him in return for an offer to assassinate the Queen. What more could the Lord Treasurer wish for in his publicity campaign against the Holy See?

"The particulars enclosed," he wrote, "favourably delivered by yo^r L. or Mr. Secr. to ye Quenes ma. would undoubtedly remoue all doubtfull conceipt of me in religion and duety."

Not unnaturally, he considered his services merited some modest reward—the Mastership, say, of the Hospital of St. Catharine's, which was just then vacant. For, as he continues:

"I cannot thinke yt possyble for Mr. Roukeby¹ or any of his coate to adventure more than I have done in her service. I would to Christ her Ma. would comaunde any further possible tryall of me. Mr. Secr. dyd tell me that he thought the Qu meant to give me a pencōn. St. Catharines is in trueth no other upon the reconyng. And yet God knoweth there is a marveyulouse difference betwene thone and thother in opinion and credite. Remember me, my derest Ld. and think yt not ynough for a man of my fortune just to lyve by meate and drinke. Justice ytselſe willeth yt should be credite and reward.

'Yo^r L. faithfullest and

"most bounde

"W^m Pa:."

But the Lord Treasurer had many other claims on his patronage, and Parry, with all his high qualifications, was hardly the man for the Mastership of St. Catharine's.

The Doctor continued to hang about the Court until

¹ See page 108.

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progress time in July, when, to keep his hand in, he seems to have undertaken the watching of a new suspect recently arrived in England. This was Mr. Edmund Neville, a kinsman of the exiled Earl of Westmorland and a claimant to the estates of the late Lord Latimer (one of whose daughters and co-heiresses, incidentally, Burghley had contrived to marry to his eldest son, Thomas). Parry dealt with Neville in the usual way (as he had dealt with Morgan and Paget in France), urging the lawfulness and advisability of assassinating the Queen, entering with him into a characteristically improbable plot for its achievement and presumably keeping his employers posted as to developments. But the affair was allowed to drop and in the autumn a fresh task was assigned him, namely, to sit in Parliament as the member for Queenborough.

It was an unfortunate appointment. He had rendered faithful and devoted service, but he was no mere lifeless and impersonal tool. Though he had shown himself ready, as he himself proclaimed, to "prevent and discover all Romaine and Spaynish practises against o^r State, or lose my life in testimony of my loyalty to the Qu Ma and duty to my honourable frendes y^e have protected me," yet in his heart he strongly disapproved of the rigorous persecution of Catholics in England to which his honourable friends seemed committed. More than once, in his letters to Burghley, he had been bold to counsel moderation, and now that he was returned for Parliament he conceived the quixotic notion of attempting (as he admitted) "to hinder all hard courses" and make a personal appeal to the Queen "to move her (if I could) to take compassion upon her Catholic subjects."

Hence the extraordinary outburst in the House of Commons and the government's determination to make away with him.

For they had no intention of letting the matter pass. A man who could make a speech like that would stop at nothing. Besides, he knew too much. It was therefore arranged to trap him. He should be made the principal in

a new "devilish conspiracy"¹ which would be uncommonly useful for making up the minds of Parliament about the bill for the Association. And this was how it was done.

First Edmund Neville was approached and frightened out of his wits. The government had been watching him and knew about his dealings with Parry; but he might still save himself if he could supply evidence against his partner and denounce him. Such a course might also help him towards inheriting the title and estates of his relative, the Earl of Westmorland. The suggestion worked. Just after Parliament reassembled, Neville laid information against Parry (February 8) and his statement was taken by Leicester and Hatton. The same night Parry was brought to Walsingham's house and on the next day was confronted with Neville and then committed to the Tower.

The trial took place on the 22nd, Parry being charged with

(1) Compassing the death of the Queen in the previous February (when he was actually revealing to her the alleged plot of Morgan and Paget!).

(2) "That he directed letters to Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, certifying him of his intention and purpose aforesaid, and desired absolution at his hands."

¹ The years 1584-85 were fruitful in alleged "devilish conspiracies." Two of the most distinguished victims were the late Duke of Norfolk's son, Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel and Henry Percy, eighth Earl of Northumberland (brother to the seventh Earl, executed in 1572). Arundel had become a Catholic in September, 1584, and was arrested in the following September for no particular reason but attempting to escape from the country. He lingered in prison for ten years, being denied permission even to see his wife and child. After the Armada he was sentenced to death, but was offered a free pardon if he would conform to the Protestant Church. He refused, and died in the Tower in 1595. Northumberland, arrested in 1584, was never tried, but was found dead in the Tower, shot through the heart, in the following April. A jury (see page 178) returned a verdict of suicide, but it was commonly believed (and accepted as a fact by Sir Walter Raleigh in a letter to Robert Cecil) that he had been murdered by the orders of Hatton. Burghley and his colleagues in the Star Chamber loyally supported Hatton by upholding the jury's verdict and publishing an official "True and Summarie Report."

(3) "That he received letters from Cardinal Como etc., and that thereupon he was fully resolved to commit the treason:—ultimo Marcii 26°."

(4) "That he persuaded Edward (*sic*) Nevell Esq. to join with him and to assist him in the treason aforesaid."

The procedure was simplified by the production of a written confession that Parry had made in the Tower—it was always useful to have a confession for subsequent publication after the event. But when the confession had been read, Parry had the impertinence to plead that it had been extracted from him by threats of torture. At this the Court was justly indignant. Lord Hunsdon vehemently denied having breathed a word about torture. What he *had* said was: "If you will willingly utter the truth of yourself it may do you good; if you will not, we must then proceed in ordinary course to take your examination." The "ordinary course," in such cases, as everyone knew, meant the rack; but the point Lord Hunsdon rightly wished to establish was that the words that had been used were not threatening.

Parry's was an awkward predicament. His confession was substantially true: he *had* engaged in treason, he *had* plotted the Queen's death; and it was idle to plead that he had acted throughout as a government agent, for the government could not be expected to bear him out. Still, he was none the less surprised at the course things were taking. He stoutly denied having ever intended to kill the Queen or having ever been armed in her presence. "I appeal," he protested, "to her own knowledge, and to my Lord Treasurer's and Master Secretary's." But my Lord Treasurer and Master Secretary lay low. Dr. Parry had outlived his usefulness and he was allowed to be condemned to death.

"I never meant to kill her," he cried despairingly to Lord Hunsdon; "I will lay my Blood upon Queen Elizabeth and you before God and the world!"

He was executed on March 2. An account of all he said on the scaffold was forwarded to the Lord Treasurer. Of course he protested his innocence to the end, "and so was turned from the ladder and after one swinge was cut downe. When his bowelles were taken out he gave a great groane."

Burghley himself meanwhile was busily exercised as to the best version of the affair to be offered to the public. The day before the execution he had written to Walsingham:

"It is desirable the fact of Dr. Parry were better published than it seemeth to be by divers busy printers."

But it was a delicate task, and on second thoughts he suggested that consultations should be held at his house for the purpose of compiling the official account. Nothing, of course, should be said of his long service as government spy, or of his voluntarily producing his correspondence with the Pope; the dates of his haunting the Court should be cunningly mixed up with those of his dealings with Neville, and to the whole account should be appended his written confession and the letter he had addressed from the Tower to the Queen. The latter was a curious mixture of apology and advice:

"And last of all," it concluded, "forget yo^r gloriouse title of Supreme Govern^t. Trouble no man y^t refuseth to sweare, for it cannot agree w^t yo^r sexe. Luther and Calvin did not allow yt. The Puritans smite at yt and the Cath world doth condenyme yt."¹

Clearly no good purpose would be served by publishing *that*. But what simpler than to take pen in hand and cross out the offending passage? The rest might be allowed to stand. With other relevant matter and marginal notes ("Oh Lord, what a lamentable being in this!" or "Parry is now become altogether past grace, and grown resolute

¹ This and the other extracts from Parry's letters are taken from the originals in the British Museum: Lansdowne xxxi. 3; xxxix. 21; xliii. 7, 47, 53.

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with Judas to kill the Lord's anointed!") it presently appeared in print as

A True and Plaine Declaration of the Horrible Treasons Practised by William Parry.

§ 4.

The Parry affair has been set out in some detail, partly because it is an admirable example of the Cecilian manner now invariably adopted by the government in dealing with conspiracies, real or imaginary; partly because, though the actual prosecution was left to others, Burghley himself was deeply interested and went to great personal trouble to ensure that the case should be properly handled.

Otherwise Parry's trial and execution are only important as an ingenious expedient for the rapid passing of the Association Bill, itself but a preparatory step towards the all-important end of destroying the Queen of Scots. As had been anticipated, amid the excitement aroused by the discovery of Parry's Horrible Treasons, both the Bill for the Association and Burghley's new Penal Bill passed both Houses without any further opposition.

In this fashion the Association for killing the Queen of Scots became ratified by law: and none too soon, as the events of the succeeding month were to prove. Owing to the fact that the Protestant Henry of Navarre was now heir to the French throne, the Catholic cause in France appeared in such peril that the Duke of Guise proceeded to form with Philip of Spain the "Holy League" for the defence of the Faith and for excluding Navarre from the succession. Matters would not have been so serious if the French King and his mother had held out against it, but distrusting the good faith of England (upon which depended any action in the Netherlands) the French government refused the new offers of the Flemish rebels and in June allied itself to the League.

Almost at the same moment the King of Spain struck his

first blow against England by ordering the seizure of all English ships, with their crews, in Spanish ports.

Elizabeth possessed an obvious weapon for a counter-thrust, and Burghley had to witness the authorization of Drake to carry out reprisals on the Spanish Main. With a fleet of twenty-nine ships Sir Francis set out on his mission of plunder and devastation—and very hurriedly, lest at the last moment Burghley should saddle him with another Doughty.

Meanwhile, in August, just as Antwerp had capitulated to Parma, Leicester and his friends had at last had their way, and a formal treaty was arranged with the Provinces. Five thousand troops under Sir John Norris were to be dispatched, in return for the surrender to England of Flushing and Brille. The expedition started, and before the end of the year Leicester himself followed to assume the supreme command. But his instructions were carefully drafted by Burghley himself, and he was expressly forbidden to assume any political rule or sovereignty in the Netherlands.

It might have been safely predicted that any enterprise whatsoever that the Earl of Leicester had charge of would turn out ill, but even Burghley himself could hardly have foreseen anything so abysmally futile. To begin with, he defied his orders and accepted the Governorship of the Provinces; he quarrelled with his subordinates and with his principal allies; by the policy he seemed to think incumbent on him of favouring the Calvinistic extremists he increased still further the existing dissensions; he was lamentably unsuccessful in the field.

But his absence left Burghley more supreme than ever in the counsels of the Queen. At every turn the wretched Leicester found himself the victim of her reproaches. She hampered his action by every means in her power: discrediting him with his allies, cutting off supplies from his troops. Also (what he did not know) she was intriguing behind his back with the Spaniard. Of course Burghley, in his letters, was always most helpful. When Leicester was

setting out, Burghley had assured him that he would consider himself "accursed in the sight of God" if he failed to do all in his power to ensure the success of the expedition. Later, he had protested entire approval of Leicester's acceptance of the Governorship (it was just what he had hoped for!), offering to "move her Majesty to alter her hard opinion," and helping to shift the blame upon one who was again to be a scapegoat later, his kinsman (and Leicester's) William Davison. He even asserted that he had threatened to resign unless the Queen abandoned her present courses. But the Highest remained implacable, and Burghley had to write again to Leicester—what was literally true—that there must be someone at her Majesty's ear who was secretly working against him!

In all this Burghley was pursuing his consistent policy. As long as the Queen of Scots was alive, war with Spain was fraught with the gravest peril. Even now there seemed a possibility of postponement, and as long as hope remained he would not hesitate to resort to duplicity.

Leicester's campaigning for the year had a characteristic end before Zutphen—the action of September 22 in which Walsingham's son-in-law, the poet Philip Sidney, won posthumous glory by his death. Happily, before the news of it arrived in England, the final device had been framed for removing the necessity of further double-dealing.

VI THE GREATEST DEVICE OF ALL

§ 1.

AT last everything was in readiness for the trapping and killing of Mary. The Protestant Association, now legalized, provided the necessary instrument—if Mary's complicity could be proved in a plot directed against the Queen. The only thing, therefore, that remained to be done was to contrive an appropriate plot.

It was a task that would present little difficulty to Walsingham; for Walsingham had an agent, a certain Gilbert Gifford, who made it his special business to discover potential tyrannicides, and instigate them to realize their ambition.

The first step, clearly, was to arrange for the tapping of Mary's correspondence; for correspondence—something definite in Mary's handwriting—was essential to the whole device. Now, by this time, the Queen of Scots had been transferred from the charge of old Shrewsbury to that of the sturdy Puritan, Sir Amyas Paulet: just the man for her gaoler, for he had solemnly promised, in the event of an attempt at rescue, to kill his prisoner with his own hand. Tutbury, moreover, being inconvenient for the business in hand, in December, 1595 (just after Leicester's departure for the Netherlands) the captive Queen had been moved to Chartley. And it so happened that Gifford had his home near Chartley. It was therefore arranged that Gifford should repair thither, taking with him the indispensable Philips, an expert decipherer of codes and a very presentable forger. Now Gifford, naturally, was still in the confidence

of the Catholics: Morgan, in Paris, believed implicitly in his good faith. Thus, the scene being laid, it only needed a letter to reach Mary from Morgan, commending to her Gifford as a reliable transmitter of correspondence.

The thing was done. Within a few weeks of Mary's arrival at Chartley she was already smuggling out letters to Gifford, and Gifford was smuggling others in to her. But every letter that he forwarded Philips first opened, decoded its contents and transmitted a copy to Walsingham. So far, of course, all the letters being perfectly innocent were for Walsingham's purpose useless; but it was satisfactory to know the machinery was working.

The time was now ripe for Gifford to set to work at his second task and discover his would-be assassin. To this end, in April, he paid a fleeting visit to Paris, got into touch once more with the conspirators there, and by the end of May was back in England.

Everything was now set. Gifford had chosen as his victim an amiable enthusiast called Antony Babington, a young gentleman who had once been a page in Shrewsbury's household and so was personally known to the Queen of Scots. No better selection could have been made; for Babington was chivalrously devoted to Mary, impractical, irresolute—and perfectly harmless. It was easy to persuade such a dreamer that tyrannicide was not merely permissible but a duty: what proved very much more difficult was to screw him up to the pitch of action. Gifford had first approached him through Ballard, a priest he had fetched over from Paris for the purpose: he followed up the suggestion himself: finally, when the wretched dupe began to waver and showed signs of throwing up the whole project in despair, he employed, as an apparently independent adviser, a certain Poley. Poley appealed with success to the young fool's chivalry and devotion, and early in July the momentous letter was written. According to Philips's decoded (and possibly doctored) version, Babington there-in promised to rescue Mary and carry out the killing of

Elizabeth. He also asks (as was necessary for Walsingham's device) for the authority of Mary to do so.

Mary's reply (dispatched on July 17) also survives only in Philips's copy. This accepts Babington's offer to rescue her, but makes no direct allusion, in the letter itself, to any project for the murder of the Queen. The letter passed in the ordinary course to Philips, who then brought his deciphered version, with the original, to Walsingham in London. As conclusive evidence it left much to be desired. But if Babington's letter had failed to entice her into approving the murder, it was clear that nothing else would succeed better. In these circumstances there was no alternative to the crudity of simple forgery: to make matters certain, Walsingham therefore authorized (as afterwards appeared) the addition of a postscript that plainly approved of the assassination. He resorted to this expedient only after long consideration—he was over a week deliberating—and almost certainly (since it was a matter of such cardinal importance) only after consulting his principal, Burghley. At last, twelve days after its original dispatch, the incriminating letter, in its final shape, was delivered.

The moment having come, Babington and his confederates were pounced upon and forced by torture to confess. Mary's secretaries, Nau and Curll, through whose hands the original had passed, admitted under threat of the rack that the copy shown them "seemed" to be the same—including the interpolated postscript! Simultaneously Mary's rooms at Chartley were searched and the preparatory drafts of the important letter were seized and sent on to Walsingham.

§ 2.

The case against the Queen of Scots being complete, Babington was executed with such others of the dastardly conspirators as were involved with him. As regards Mary herself there was still a considerable portion of the Council against taking any decisive action; whilst Leicester, just

then back in England, was all for his favourite procedure of poison. But Burghley stood firm. It was obviously a case for applying the new Act of Association, and (as the law provided) a regular commission of inquiry should be instituted.

It was decided that the trial should be held at Fotheringay Castle, near Burghley's titular estate in Northamptonshire. Thither Mary was removed on October 6; but it was still some days before she would admit, as a Sovereign, the jurisdiction of the English Queen. When she did so it was under protest, and lest refusal should be interpreted as a confession of guilt.

On the 14th, the inquiry opened in the hall at Fotheringay. Burghley (who on such an occasion would have modestly preferred to efface himself) was compelled to hobble to a place on the right of the Lord Chancellor, Bromley. But the actual conduct of the prosecution was left entirely to the Secretary.

The charges alleged were: firstly, that Mary had been contriving her escape: secondly, that she had approved the assassination of the Queen. The prisoner, who was not allowed counsel, conducted her case with ability. She boldly admitted the first accusation, claiming it was no crime in her, in the circumstances, to attempt her escape. She was reluctant to confess any correspondence at all with Babington and emphatically denied any knowledge of intended assassination. In refutation of such a charge, she demanded to be confronted face to face with the two secretaries, who had vouched for the *seeming* authenticity of Walsingham's copy of her letter. She also asked to have laid before the court the preliminary drafts of her letter that Walsingham had in his possession.

Both requests were refused. What the secretaries might say in open court, and in their mistress's presence, would very probably be less satisfactory to the Crown than what they had confessed to secretly in terror of the rack. As to the letter itself, Walsingham could not produce the original,

for it had been duly passed on to Babington, and he had presumably good reason for not producing the preliminary drafts that had been found in Mary's rooms at Chartley.

The court adjourned on the following day. The whole account of its proceedings exists in Burghley's own hand and it was he who reported each day's incidents to the Queen.

On the 25th the Commission of Peers sat again at Westminster. Nau, Mary's French secretary, strenuously denied his mistress's complicity in the plot and his evidence was accordingly suppressed. So also was the draft for the original letter which he also demanded should be produced. The Queen of Scots herself was not allowed to be present; nor was she there on the 29th, when the court unanimously pronounced her guilty.

§ 3.

But there still remained the scruples of Elizabeth herself to overcome: Burghley had not forgotten the trouble he had had with her over Norfolk's execution.

When Parliament met in November he caused an address of both Houses to be presented to the Queen, urging her to put Mary to death. She was clearly reluctant: she needed time for "prayer and contemplation." Was there no other way? "No other sound and assured means," she was answered.

In the end she responded in her own more characteristic style:

"If I should say I would not do what you request, it might be peradventure more than I thought, and to say I would do it might perhaps breed peril of what you labour to preserve, being more than in your wisdoms and discretions would seem convenient."

On December 6 the sentence was publicly proclaimed in London, and soon afterwards Davison (who was acting as

secretary during the absence through illness of his master, Walsingham) was instructed to draft a warrant for the execution. He presently produced it, but was told to hold it back a little. And there the matter was allowed to rest for some weeks. At the beginning of February someone was put up to remind the Queen. Of course: it should be done. Davison was sent for and the warrant was signed; but she still seems to have wished it delayed. Perhaps Robin's suggestion was the soundest after all. Poison!—Davison promised to mention the idea to Walsingham.

But before seeing Walsingham, Davison went straight to Cecil House with the warrant. The Great Seal was attached to it at once and the following day Burghley and Walsingham between them concerted their plan of action. It was possible that Paulet might act on the poison suggestion—he had boasted on a former occasion of not sticking at murder—but if he didn't, the warrant must be dispatched without further consultation with the Queen. Walsingham arranged the whole project, even to the details of burial, and Burghley commented in the margin. The same day (February 2) they drew up a draft memorandum in the name of the Council to explain to the Queen, when it was all over, the reasons that had moved them to send off the warrant without consulting her—"and yet we are now at this time most sorry to understand that your Majesty is so greatly grieved with this kind of proceeding. . . ." She wasn't grieved yet, for the thing wasn't done; but they knew she would be, and it was as well to be prepared in advance.

During the morning of the same day, when Burghley and Walsingham were busily at work drafting plans, the Queen sent to Davison and learnt to her dismay that the warrant was already sealed. Didn't her Majesty wish it done? he inquired. Yes: but not that way—it threw too much responsibility on herself. Poison was the obvious method.

Davison immediately hurried to Cecil House to report what she had said, upon which Burghley summoned a Council meeting for the next day. It met at Cecil House

and Burghley prevailed on the various members to act on the scheme he had arranged with Walsingham, and accept responsibility for dispatching the warrant immediately. That done, he delivered it to Beale, the clerk of the Council, to take down to Fotheringay that night.

In complete ignorance of what had been done Elizabeth next day was still harping to Davison upon "another way of doing it." The whole business was getting on her nerves. Only the previous night (while Beale was on his way to Fotheringay!) she had dreamed that the Queen of Scots was executed. She had been very angry at it, she said, and turning to Davison she told him it was a good thing *he* had not been there. Davison shuffled uneasily; but he had still worse to face, when he had to inform his mistress, a day or two later, that Paulet had refused to act on Walsingham's proposal—he had even repudiated the idea with a Puritan's righteous indignation. "The daintiness of these precise fellows!" she cried—the very people who professed to love and defend her!

Paulet having failed, the warrant sent by Burghley was put into effect on the 8th. Mary passed to the scaffold, deprived of the last sacraments, but a martyr (as she claimed) to the Church "Catholic, Apostolic and Roman."

§ 4.

The trifling difficulties that followed were unimportant. The Queen, as had been anticipated, blazed with anger against the Council, and particularly Davison. Perhaps it was fitting that Davison should take the blame. Burghley in a special memorandum sets forth:

"The state of the cause *as it ought to be conceived and reported* concerning the Execution done upon the Queen of Scots."

It was all Davison's fault: the Queen had had nothing to do with it. This, the official story, was swallowed by the

Court of France: it was swallowed by Mary's own son in return for a trifling consideration in cash. As for Philip, the story *he* received was that Burghley had been absent all the time through illness, and that the execution had been carried through by Davison and the rest of the Scottish Queen's enemies in the Council!

Davison was deprived of his secretaryship, imprisoned and financially ruined; otherwise no one was the worse. Against Burghley, it is true, the Queen's private resentment was keenest: she knew it was to him she owed her humiliation. But though it was her greatest, it was not her first humiliation at his hands. She would recover from it in time.

It hardly mattered very much if she did not. Burghley's course was run, his achievement complete: the killing of Mary was the consummation of his life's endeavour. The Queen of Scots had died, as she had lived, the personal representative of a cause, and with her perished what Burghley had striven all his life to destroy.

VII

"DEUS FLAVIT"

§ 1.

BURGHLEY had effected, by the killing of the Queen of Scots, something more decisive in the world's history than he could ever have imagined. Sovereigns had been put to death ere then; but always furtively—by assassination. The notion of holding a sovereign monarch liable to temporal jurisdiction was something hitherto undreamed of. Its actual accomplishment in Mary's case undermined the old conception of sacred and anointed majesty and shook to the roots that novel, superstitious reverence of the Prince, as personally quasi-divine, which had been the contribution of Protestantism to political theory. The precedent thus set by the Crown of England was presently to redound upon itself; for the execution of Mary made possible that of her grandson. In no other of his achievements was Burghley more the maker of the future.

To him, naturally, the signification of the act was more immediately practical: it had removed the only dangerous Catholic rival to his mistress. James had finally declared for the revolution: Philip of Spain, to whom Mary had bequeathed her rights, would never be acceptable to the nation. He was of Plantagenet descent and hardly more foreign than Mary; but Mary's grandmother had been a Tudor, she herself had aroused widespread sympathy—in many passionate devotion, and to the Catholics of England, as well as to that vast majority who had acquiesced so tepidly in the new State religion, she would have been universally acceptable as Queen. But now that she was

gone, none but the most zealous—Allen, Parsons and a handful of the exiles—would ever have had Philip of Spain for King. To the Catholics, loyalty to the old religion might be more potent than loyalty to the established government; but if there were no clear means of changing the established government, there would be nothing to conflict politically with their natural sense of patriotism. At last, after thirty years, Burghley's government had ceased to be the domination of a faction and become, in a true sense, national. At any time, during the past nineteen years, a large part of the nation would have welcomed Spanish intervention on behalf of Mary: now, whatever its professed motive, a Spanish invasion could but extinguish temporarily all religious differences and unite Catholic and Protestant, conservative and revolutionary, in defence of the national honour.

§ 2.

It was characteristic of Philip that, the opportunity for intervention being now definitely lost, he should have decided resolutely for action. His best advisers were against it: the Pope, suspicious of his political ambitions, was also against it. But Philip had the determined backing of the clerical politicians: Allen (who was just now raised to the cardinalate) and Parsons. Allen and Parsons at length prevailed at Rome, and the apostolic benediction was obtained for the belated Spanish expedition.

But the English government was not idle. Within a month of Mary's execution a fleet was made ready under Drake with secret orders to destroy whatever preparations had been made in the ports of Spain.

No sooner had he set sail than a messenger was sent in pursuit with the following order:

“You shall forbear to enter forcibly into any of the said King's ports or havens, or to offer any violence to any of his towns or shipping within harbour or to do any act of hostility on land.”

These instructions (which were never intended to reach him) were from Burghley. His, also, were the continued negotiations with Parma. During Leicester's absence, things had continued to go ill with the English force in the Netherlands. As a protest against the condemnation of Mary, two English captains had surrendered their towns to the Spaniard, thereby increasing the Hollanders' distrust of their gallant allies. But Burghley's overtures to Parma were not made more easy by Drake's destructive raid on Cadiz; in excuse, however, he could plead with truth that a messenger had been dispatched to forbid any offensive action. Drake, he maintained, and no one else was responsible: her Majesty was "greatly offended with him."

Lord Burghley's colleagues were growing a little perturbed at such conciliation. "I pray God," wrote Howard, the Lord Admiral, "we do not curse for this a long grey beard with a white head, witless, that will make the world think us heartless." But that white head was very far from being witless: it knew very well what it was about. War was certain: there could be no doubt about that. And now that Mary was dead, even if the Spaniard—as was unlikely—escaped destruction at sea, there was every chance that a united people would repel his invasion. All the same, in war one could never be sure. It was the one branch of politics in which Burghley had learnt to distrust his own judgement. And certainly the people were so far alarmingly apathetic. In so great a national emergency there was not that alacrity one would like to have seen in providing the sinews of war. As for the trading classes, never militantly patriotic, they were loud in their abuse of the gentlemen pirates, to whose greed alone they attributed the outbreak of hostilities. It was just conceivable, therefore, that the worst might come to the worst: and if it did (Burghley asked himself) how would he personally stand?

So far, he had reason to believe, not too badly. The King of Spain could not forget his constant endeavours at conciliation, nor the consistency with which he had set his

face against the enterprises of Drake and the pirates. And we know now, having access to the Spanish archives, that he had very good grounds for confidence. When Mendoza, in the event of a successful revolution, had submitted the names of those he thought it advisable to make away with, Philip, in the margin, had made a single exception. Burghley, he wrote, did not matter: “he is a great heretic; but he is old, and it was he who advised the understandings with the Prince of Parma, and he has done no harm.” Indeed, if there was one of the New Testament parables that seemed to Burghley transparently simple it was that of the Unjust Steward. Throughout his career, wherever there had seemed any likelihood of being “cast out,” he had always hastily made overtures to the Mammon of Unrighteousness. Once Mary Tudor had stood in that relation towards him: on this present occasion it was her widower. If, as was just remotely possible, the Spanish invasion should succeed, there were some among his colleagues who would dear abide it; but he?—no: had he not striven to the last for peace, actually *aiding* Philip’s projects by thwarting Drake and “double-crossing” Leicester in the Netherlands?

If there was one person who at this juncture could be relied on not to oppose him it was the Queen. It was true she had been difficult since Mary’s execution. She had once (as he remembered with pain) actually told him it was she who had raised him out of the dirt and was able to cast him down again. However, both statements were untrue, as she knew very well; and all such insults—that was only one of them—originated in a consolingly satisfactory cause: she was afraid—terrified, indeed, as she had never been terrified before. She had been brought, she realized, to such a pass that nothing could now save her but the fleet. In moments of more frenzied panic she would have it the Lord Treasurer was hoarding money that ought to be expended upon the navy: that his negotiations with Parma were only allowing more time for Philip to complete his preparations. He was getting old, she told him, and doting.

But in her heart she knew all the time that if peace were still possible—and Burghley persuaded her it was—he alone was capable of procuring it. Hence, to her protesting Robin, she could only asseverate that, whatever it cost, she must have peace: "If my ships are lost," she moaned, "nothing can save me!" So it was that, well into the following spring, all the time that Leicester was concluding his military fiasco against Parma, Burghley continued, with the Queen's approval, to negotiate with the enemy until the actual sailing of the Armada.

Not that, in the meantime, he was neglecting the necessary preparations. In organizing the defences, by sea and land, his labours were as unremitting as ever. For years past he had made the administration of the navy almost as much his own business as the Lord Admiral's. It was to him, now, that Hawkins wrote direct for instructions; it was he who drew up lists of ships and disposed of them for their several duties: posting Drake to Plymouth for the guarding of the Channel, Howard to make his base in the Thames. He was equally responsible for the defences on land: placing Hunsdon, as Lord of the Marches, in charge of the north; Grey and the veteran Norris in the midlands, and in Devon his latest protégé at Court, the brilliant, but slightly too independent Raleigh.

§ 3.

On July 20 the Spanish fleet was in the Channel. Day by day, through the following week of suspense, came reports from the coast of doubtful gunfire out at sea. On the 28th it was heard off Calais: the next day off Gravelines. It was then there occurred that sudden freshening of the wind—the veritable breath of God!—and past fears were forgotten in a tempest of national rejoicing.

When the crisis was over and the remains of the Armada scurrying north before the wind, Burghley with his Queen came down to review the army at Tilbury. A few weeks later her Majesty did him the honour of inspecting at Cecil

House the body of men-at-arms he had raised at his own charge for his country's defence. It was a fitting culmination: for the triumph, after all, was mainly Burghley's. Proclaiming to the world the achievement of the English revolution, the victory over the Armada was a fine spectacular finale to the labours of a whole generation.

§ 4.

The great Alteration had been conceived and arduously carried through in spite of all but insuperable difficulties. When Burghley had assumed control of the State, he had found the people as a whole opposed to the change, unleavened by the new doctrines, obstinately, if not passionately, papist. The few advantages he had possessed—the divisions among his enemies, the prestige of royalty—had quickly been outweighed by the spiritual kindling effected by the Council of Trent, by the new enthusiasm that inspired, and was inspired by martyrdom. Yet Burghley, in spite of all, had been victorious. By policy, by caution, when necessary by sheer ruthlessness, he had gradually worn down the forces opposed to him. And above all by patience. From the outset he had planned far ahead of his contemporaries: scheming, insinuating, "practising," he had persevered steadily with his "Thirty Years' Plan," placing all his hopes in the future generation.

Hence his attention to prudent propaganda: the rigorous searching out and destroying of all printed defences of the old religion; the substitution in their place of *ex parte* statements of the issues in dispute; encomiums of the new régime; violent, but effective onslaughts on the old. Whole chapters might be filled concerning these official and semi-official publications: from Jewel's *Apology* to Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. So important was this purely literary side of the revolution that, in the midst of his stupendous political labours, he would constantly take a personal hand in it himself: circulating, for instance, after the Northern Rising,

his own *Declaration of the Queenes Proceedings since her Reign*; or later, by his *Execution of Justice*, disguising as merely political what was essentially a persecution for religion. Naturally, however, he had to rely, for the most part, on anonymous pens, for many of which he found regular employment: writing up the latest "practisings," and "horrible" (but happily circumvented) "conspiracies." Some, of all these cartloads of mud, was bound to adhere in the end. A new generation would grow up to regard the revolution as an accomplished fact, reading nothing on the subject but what the government had prepared for it, knowing the old Catholic England only as a memory of ageing men, or else as the travesty officially invented.

And all turned out much as Burghley had designed. The new generation had already reached manhood and a third was in process of being born. It is true that this young England was not wholly what Burghley would have wished. In particular the national Church was disappointing. It was still very far from being as coterminous with the nation as the old Popish Church of his youth. Recusancy was still regrettably widespread: Puritanism was breeding ominous sects and divisions among the people: the conduct of the official clergy was still leaving much to be desired. All these things Burghley took very gravely to heart. He felt personally responsible for the Church he had nursed into existence, and which regarded him still as a kind of spiritual foster-father. It was he to whom the bishops were constantly appealing for support, and their victims, the Puritans, for sympathy. He, it was felt, was the proper arbiter in theological disputes: the composer of—alas—ecclesiastical scandals. When Archbishop Sandys of York was discovered (oh horror!) "in naked bed" with the inn-keeper's wife at Doncaster, it was to Burghley, as of course, that the unfortunate prelate poured out his distress; and Burghley, for the sake of the Church's honour, accepted and endorsed the egregious explanation, that she must have slipped in without his noticing. It was partly, perhaps,

such incidents as this, that explained the feeble hold of the new Church on the nation, and the fact that, in place of sincere Profession of Christian Religion, “partly Papistry, partly Paganism and Irreligion had crept in.” But especially Paganism and Irreligion: and that was better, no doubt, than unadulterated Papistry.

Such was the England made safe by the destruction of the Armada: a new England, of Burghley’s making, if not entirely according to Burghley’s design. And it was fitting that its endurance should seem to have been finally achieved, not by weight of guns nor human devising, but by manifestly divine interposition—by the winds of Heaven itself. *Deus flavit, et dissipati sunt*: an authentic testimony, if any were needed, of the approval and gratification of the Almighty!

EPILOGUE: FATHER AND SON

§ 1.

AT sixty-eight, but appearing much older, Burghley had ten years of life still before him: ten years during which most men would have enjoyed a contented retirement, mellowed by the retrospect of great achievement, a peaceful interval in which to prepare for the end. But not so Burghley. These last ten years were as fully occupied as any, unrelaxing in effort, in accomplishment fruitful; yet, in some respects, a little pathetic. They were years, for one thing, of great personal loneliness. Both his daughters had died: the elder, Lady Oxford, in the midst of the preparations for the Armada. And in the following year he had lost his wife. On the subject of her death he wrote a brooding memorandum, consoling himself simply with the pious reflection that she had been given the "grace to have the true knowledge of her salvation." But he had still his two sons: Thomas, stupid but reformed; and his specially beloved little Robert. It was for Robert, above all else, that he continued to work till the end. Someone had to succeed to the place he must presently vacate; and someone, preferably, who would continue the Cecilian tradition. Who, then, more suitable than the capable and assiduous little Robert?

As a boy, it had been found impossible to keep him from his books, and what he lacked in physical development he abundantly supplied by his precocious ability and application. Burghley had trained him carefully. It was for Robert that he had written out those famous *Precepts*: "Trust no man with your Credit or Estate . . . Be sure you keep some

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Great Man alwayes to your Friend. . . ." and so forth. Happily for young Robert, he had needed no Great Man to his friend but his own father. At twenty-five he was already shaped mentally in his parent's image; patiently calculating, with an infinite capacity for detail and routine, and (above all) with no other interests in life to subordinate to his devotion to the State. The Lord Treasurer had already procured him a seat in Parliament; but, before he died, he would have to see him in the Council—if possible, Secretary of State.

And it should not have been difficult. Death was rapidly removing the politicians of the last generation: Burghley's old rival, Leicester, had died only a month after the Armada; two years later, the staunch, but sometimes misguided Walsingham; and these were to be followed very soon by the rapacious and dandified Hatton. That should have left only Knollys to champion the fanatical Puritans. But alas!—Hatton had a successor. The indefatigable old Queen—as amorous as ever—must needs have another "affair"!

This time it was with the merest boy—but a very important boy: Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. He was barely twenty when the Queen first became infatuated with him: of the oldest nobility, but connected, also, with the new people. His mother, in fact, was old Knollys's daughter, and (what was more) during her husband's absence in Ireland as deputy, she had become the mistress of the Earl of Leicester. When Lady Essex's husband died with mysterious suddenness, Leicester married his late mistress and took charge of the education of his stepson. So it was that the young Earl had come to Court as a member of the Leicester-Knollys faction, in misguided opposition to the Cecils. In character, the young man was typical of that Elizabethan *fin de siècle*: gallant and courageous, but moody and something of a dreamer: a Shakespearian hero—but, for practical politics, futile. Thanks to the lewd cravings he aroused in the old Queen—she was thirty-five years his



QUEEN ELIZABETH

From the portrait at Jesus College, Oxford, by permission of the Principal and Fellows

senior—he obtained a disproportionate influence at Court, which he used deliberately to thwart the Cecils. Moreover, just as Leicester had possessed the backing of Walsingham, so he had behind him (what was far more antagonistic) the intellectual stiffening of Burghley's own nephews, the two sons of old Nicholas Bacon (deceased).¹ It was the adherence to him of the Bacons, Anthony and Francis, that made Essex really formidable. Old Burghley was sometimes tempted to regret that, in the interest of his son's advancement, he had so brusquely repelled the suits of his two nephews—for "kindness which," as Anthony put it, "I thought I might justly expect at the Lord Treasurer's hands, who has inned my ten years' harvest into his own barn without a halfpenny charge." Disappointed in their uncle, the two Bacons had addressed themselves to the dashing young Earl; to whose nobility of blood and favour with the Highest they felt confident that their young geniuses might profitably become allied. They even envisaged, in their exuberance, a rival system to the Cecilian: one that should eventually supplant the Cecilian by virtue of its very efficiency. Anthony, especially, threw his heart into the scheme. Alert, widely travelled, a talented diplomatist, he had friends in every Court in Europe: with their aid he presently began to organize a system of intelligence, unofficial, but no less exact (as far as it went) than Burghley's. The fruits of it were for the use of Essex, wherewithal to confound the Cecils. As for Francis Bacon, his contribution was less altruistic. Trained to the law, but dabbling in universal knowledge, he aimed at attaining through his young patron the betterment of mankind in general, and of Francis Bacon in particular. The Earl, recognizing genius, revered it: in return, the impecunious young lawyer—with an eye to the Attorney-Generalship—was lavish with advice and admonition.

This strange combination was not one the Cecils could afford to condemn. It reinforced Knollys in the political

¹ He had died in 1579, two years after Sir Thomas Smith.

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leadership of the Puritans, and Drake and the sea-dogs in their zest for the prosecution of the war. In both these issues Essex and the Bacons fell foul of the policy of Burghley; but it was the whole "*Regnum Cecilianum*" they were deliberately opposing—and especially the advancement of Robert. Hence the last ten years of Burghley's life resolve themselves into a protracted duel between Essex and the younger Cecil: a fight for the continuance, or final destruction, of the whole Cecilian régime. Burghley himself never lived to see the result; but he was able to do much, before he died, to ensure the victory of his son, and the ignominious ruin of his son's chief antagonist.

§ 2.

For most of the time it was about the war that the two parties were principally at issue. The conflict between England and Spain, destined also to drag on till Burghley's death undecided, was to Essex merely a means to military glorification; for the Puritans it was to be the destruction of Spain and all her empire utterly; for Drake and his friends, a potential source of still greater personal profit. To Burghley, however, the war appeared senselessly wasteful. England had now nothing, politically, to gain from it; still less, if he would only face realities, had Philip. It was true that prudence as well as honour demanded that England should secure the independence of the seven revolted Provinces; and therefore, until such time as Philip renounced his claims to them, hostilities would have to continue. Not necessarily, however, very vigorously or expensively. Piratical attacks on Spanish trade were now manifestly justifiable: by suffering them to be made in a spirit of private enterprise, it should be possible to keep the enemy weakened without exorbitant demands upon the Treasury. And that, however much Essex and his followers might dislike it, was as much as Burghley would concede.

As for France: the situation over there had developed

remarkably. Murderous reprisals had removed in turn both Guise and the King himself: the same year the old Queen-Mother herself had died, and the throne was at last occupied by the Huguenot Henry of Navarre. But as "Henri Quatre" he still had to fight for the possession of his realm. The power of the League was still strong; and, however much he might acknowledge Catholicism as the religion of the State, Catholic France refused to have a Protestant for its sovereign. Hence Henry's application for English aid. It struck Burghley as queer, after all these years, to be aiding a foreign sovereign against his revolting subjects: "the world," he commented, "is become very strange." Still, it was a different matter when the rebels were papists, and Henry's emissary knew to whom he should apply. "If the Queen," he observed, "says 'Do this' and Burghley says 'Do it not,' it is he who will be obeyed." Over a friendly little dinner at Cecil House, Burghley agreed to the details of what assistance he would supply—but without any keen enthusiasm.

In Burghley's eyes, the principal compensation was that a campaign in France would temporarily remove the Earl of Essex. Just now the Earl was particularly troublesome. In opposition to Robert Cecil, he had had the effrontery to suggest the re-establishment of the disgraced Davison and his appointment to the vacant Secretaryship. For obvious reasons, Burghley could never permit that: nor would the rest of the Council. Therefore, by way of compromise, no one had been appointed at all. The Lord Treasurer himself assumed responsibility for duties of the place; but unofficially it was young Robert who actually performed them. In this way, though deprived for the present of the Secretary's privileges and emoluments, he secured something even more valuable, experience of public affairs and practical familiarity with his father's political technique. But Burghley was not satisfied with this. Visibly ageing, and more than ever a martyr to his gout, he retired for longer intervals to Theobalds, sulking (it was thought) at the foiling of his son's ambitions.

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The Queen, with her postured jocularly, would rally her "disconsolate and retired Spryte, the hermite of Tyboll," but she deigned, at last, to visit him in State. Essex being away, Robert Cecil was knighted and, a few months later, sworn to the Council.

§ 3.

A secondary subject of contention between Essex and the Cecils was the treatment of the "novelists"—those malcontent Puritans who wanted their Protestantism in a form less adulterated than that provided by the Establishment. Burghley himself was no enemy to Calvinism as such. As far as he was concerned, if a doctrine was definitely anti-Catholic, there was a *prima facie* case for encouraging it. On the other hand, as a good Erastian he could not countenance the notion that ecclesiastical forms imposed by the Queen could possibly be inconsistent with divine revelation: such a theory, in his eyes, was as logically absurd as it was practically mischievous.

Attacks on the episcopacy, with unauthorized prayer-meetings or "prophecings," had started as early as the 'seventies. Grindal, who had succeeded Parker as Primate, was so far in sympathy with the movement that he refused to take any action. But Nationalism, Burghley's real religion, depended implicitly on the uniformity of a nation-embracing Church. If Protestantism were to luxuriate unchecked, as in Germany, if individuals had to be satisfied with Scriptural authority before they would accept the dogma of the Royal Supremacy, the nationalist idea would utterly collapse, and the way would be left open for the disciplined advances of Rome. The stiff-necked Grindal being removed, his place was supplied by one who could be relied on for the enforcement of discipline—Whitgift of Worcester. He, like the rest of the old Marian exiles, was a convinced adherent of the Calvinist theology; but believing, like Burghley, in outward conformity, he was prepared to exact it rigorously. A little too rigorously: for having obtained the royal assent

to certain orthodox "articles," he proceeded to demand assent to them on oath and prosecute defaulters in his Court of High Commission. To Burghley, such a course seemed unnecessarily harsh: "this sifting of poor ministers" he could not approve, "except they were very notorious offenders in papistry or heresy." Altogether it was "too much savouring of the Romish inquisition."

The Archbishop's reply had been a little malicious: he thought his articles "better agreeing with the rule of justice and charity, and less captious, than those in other courts."

What did he mean by that? If he were referring to Burghley's own innovation in using torture for the extorting of confessions, that was hardly a relevant comparison. The rack, after all, had been used only on suspected traitors: moreover, the victims, in every case, had been papists. At all events, "though *omnia licent*, yet *omnia non expediunt*." At that particular moment, in 1584, with hostilities imminent against Spain, and the Queen of Scots still alive to undo the great Alteration, it had certainly not been expedient to do anything which might prevent the union of all Protestants for their mutual protection.

But since that time—a thing that Knollys and his associates obtusely ignored—the situation had completely changed. Not only was the danger from popery less acute, but the Puritans had become far more wild and aggressive. The flood of "Marprelate" tracts, which had begun to appear just after the Armada, aimed frankly at the overthrow of the official Establishment, together with its "monstrous Anti-Christ the Beelzebub of Canterbury," and the "incarnate devils" (his brother bishops)—"cozening knaves and enemies of God." In view of such outbursts it was impossible to blame the Primate for prosecuting the more militant controversialists; and the government itself took stronger measures against a group of enthusiasts who, announcing Doomsday to have arrived, proceeded themselves to execute the final Judgement at Charing Cross. Old Knollys, of course, still marvelled "how her Majesty can be

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persuaded that she is in as much danger of such as are called Purytanes as she is of the Papysts; and even Burghley was momentarily perturbed when the law of 1581, directed against Catholics, was twisted by the Crown lawyers to justify the death sentence for two "Brownists," Barrow and Greenwood. "No Papist," he claimed boldly, "had suffered for religion, and Protestants' blood should not be the first shed." Such powerful intercession procured a week's reprieve; but motives of policy, in the end, caused Burghley to change his mind. It happened that the Parliament of 1593 was then sitting, and the Commons were showing a distaste for a new government bill, attaching to the more fractious Puritans some, at least, of the disabilities of Catholic recusants. As a lesson to the opponents of what he conceived necessary to the safety of the Establishment, Burghley permitted the law to take its course. Greenwood and Barrow were hanged, and the new bill became law: against "the wicked and dangerous practices of seditious sectaries and disloyal persons." As a result of this drastic enactment—*To retain the Queen's subjects in obedience*—the irreconcilable dissentients migrated, for the most part, to the Netherlands: the remainder, acknowledging they had "grievously offended God in contemning her Majesty's godly and lawful government and authority," acquiesced in the same thenceforward—at any rate outwardly.

It was a happy achievement. At the same time, lest there should have been any misunderstanding as to the government's intentions, the new act was passed in conjunction with another, *Against Popish Recusants*, to compel all "terming themselves Catholics" to register their place of abode and not to remove out of a radius of five miles therefrom. It was the completion of Burghley's great penal code, and the two acts together represented a clear victory for the Cecils over their opponents. It was characteristic, indeed, of the factious opposition of Anthony Bacon and his friends, that those professed champions of the Puritans had to plead, on this occasion, in sympathy with the Catholics. But it availed

them nothing. Moreover, Francis Bacon, in the same Parliament, had seriously damaged his own prospects by opposing the government in the matter of a subsidy. Elizabeth, like her successor Victoria, was apt to regard all constitutional opposition as personal disloyalty to herself. The Cecils, too, were painfully shocked. The Queen, they feared, would never forgive him.

§ 4.

And then came the case of the mysterious Dr. Lopez. Not that, to Burghley, he was so very mysterious: Burghley, in fact, knew about him everything worth knowing. Lopez was a Portuguese Jew, long resident in London, a distinguished medical practitioner and physician to the Queen herself. Also, as a side line, he had acted in the past for Burghley and Walsingham as a secret agent against Spain. He had played, in this capacity, the usual game of Parry and the rest, plotting and counterplotting with such bewildering complexity that anyone, happening by chance upon some suspicious clue, might be led to entirely wrong conclusions.

And it was precisely thus that the foolish young Essex had been deceived. Of course there was nothing against Lopez: the Cecils *knew* there was nothing, and Robert reported as much to the Queen. Elizabeth, believing him, was justifiably incensed against the misguided young spy-hunter, called him a "rash and temerarious youth" and insisted on justice being done by the "poor doctor."

It was first blood to the Cecils; but Essex was still unconvinced. In a rage of mortification, he resolved to prove he had been right after all. Fortunately for him, the doctor's Portuguese subordinates were reckless adventurers, who in fear of the rack would say anything: from them he had no difficulty in obtaining the evidence he required—" . . . the point of the conspiracy her Majesty's death; the executioner Lopez and the manner poison!" The Earl was jubilant.

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Even the Cecils had to admit themselves satisfied—they dared not do otherwise: feeling was running high, and at such a moment it would have been highly indiscreet to advertise the dealings which Burghley himself had had with Lopez. Burghley knew better than anyone that Lopez had neither motive nor design to assassinate the Queen. But he had known, for that matter, the same of Parry. It was unfortunate to have to admit that Essex had been right, especially when, in fact, he was utterly wrong. In the circumstances, however, there was no alternative; and the doctor—regrettable necessity!—was disembowelled.

The Cecils had been worsted; but not without a compensating gain elsewhere. Before the Lopez business was ended, the Attorney Generalship—which Essex had been so violently demanding “for Francis”—was filled by another, Francis’s life-long rival, the famous Edward Coke.

§ 5.

The imaginary plot of Lopez had the inevitable result of inflaming the enthusiasts for the war. Burghley, for his part, was more than weary of it all. He had been growing perceptibly feebler of late. Confined, more than ever, to his bedroom, he would crouch for hours over the fire, silently brooding. Suitors found him more irritable than of old, answering them in “a kind of crossing and wayward manner that he hath.” His secretary, Sir Michael Hicks, describes him as “nothing spirited, but lying on his couch he museth and slumbereth. And being a little before supper at the fire, I offered him some letters and other papers, but he was very soon weary of them, and told me he was unfit to hear suits.” At last he needed rest. The country also needed rest; yet those others—Essex, Raleigh, Drake—seemed insatiable. And now there was less justification than ever. The King of France—that perfidious rogue!—had sold his conscience for Paris. Or had he sold his conscience? In like circumstances would not he,

Burghley, have done likewise? He gazed thoughtfully into the fire and wondered. At all events, by becoming a Catholic, Henry had effectually shattered the League. The civil war was now practically ended, and France was uniting to repel the invading Spaniard. Essex, of course, would still have England take a hand. But why? When Henry was a Protestant, that was understandable; but now—they might safely be left to fight it out between themselves. The country's strength was needed for its own protection.

Scarcely able to write, the old man drew up an elaborate memorandum for a scheme of national defence: against the new armada fitting out in Spain; against the threatening Irish revolt under Hugh O'Neil. The utmost aggression he would permit was a project of Drake's for a marauding expedition to the Indies: something that would temporarily appease the fanatics, cost nothing (if he could help it) and perhaps bring Philip to see reason. Even about this he was reluctant, but Drake had learnt his strength and was no longer restrainable. In August, 1595, he set out with old Hawkins on his final voyage from Plymouth. The two kinsmen bickered sadly on the way out, and in less than six months they were both of them dead.

In the meantime, however, the Lord Treasurer had been able to devote his attention to more pressing matters nearer home: to Ireland, whither he had bade his son be urgent with the Queen about sending instant reinforcements; to a tiresome theological dispute at Cambridge, between the doctrine of Free Grace and the uncompromising Calvinism of the Archbishop of Canterbury's new "Articles." "God from eternity" (so the Primate declared) "hath predestined some to life, some he hath reprobated to death." Burghley had always been distrustful of dogma. It was necessary, of course, to support the Archbishop, but it was annoying that such a controversy should have arisen at all. It was of the very essence of Burghley's national Establishment—and his spirit, in this, has pervaded it ever since—that, no matter how fundamental the issue in dispute, anything like a

definition should be avoided. In this case, therefore, he insisted that the dispute should instantly be dropped. And dropped, accordingly, it was. Burghley's voice was still potent in ruling the Church he had planted.

And latterly there seemed to be encouraging signs that the sickly cutting had taken root. One of these symptoms was the publication of Richard Hooker's philosophical exposition of the *ratio* of the National Church; and naturally, as "Your Lordship's most willingly at commandment," the author had submitted to Burghley's judgement both himself and his "simple doing."

In these final years, this tardy burgeoning of the State Religion was one of Burghley's principal consolations. He felt he had outlived all his own generation: to his juniors he appeared but a relic of the past, a check on potential progress. Obstinate they would see in him but a figure of sly decrepitude—an image of Polonius—"eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum." And he, for his part, could make as little of the youngsters. These contemporaries of Essex—or, as we should say, of Shakespeare—had not the earnestness, the solidity, of his own contemporaries in youth. Among the young intellectuals and literary men he could see no zeal for the cause of True Religion: it was hardly possible to deduce from their writings that the glorious Gospel had "taken place." All was fanciful Paganism, quaint heroical conceits, strange inexplicable melancholies and—most disquieting of all—an undercurrent everywhere of what could only be described as popery. Again Paganism and Popery! Certainly if the ideals of young England were those of its poets and dramatists, they were poles apart from his own. At times it would almost appear that they set the glory of the nation in the past: even associating it wistfully with a faith now irrevocably destroyed. It might be that it was only a transitory phase. If that were so, one might still have hope in the future. How would posterity judge—that posterity to which Campion had appealed at his trial—between those who, with himself, had been fervent for

True Religion, and these young poets (if their works survived)—half Pagan sentimentalists, half insidious expounders of Popery? It was comforting to reflect on Hooker and his *Law of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Such as he, it was to be hoped, would have the shaping of the England that was to come: not the poets and play-writers—"Shake-speare" and the rest.

§ 6.

Amid his increasing afflictions, what the old statesman felt most irksome of all was his final inability to write. No longer could he sit in meditative solitude, drawing up memoranda of "business to be performed" or scrutinizing the alternatives of some political dilemma. Everything now had to be dictated to his secretary: his very signature had to be affixed to documents with a stamp—"for want of a right hand." Yet he constantly fretted at being absent from Court. If her Majesty did not dislike it he would come, "in body not half a man, but in mind passable." And so he continued, alternately tottering to his place at the Council-board and taking to his bed at Cecil House or Theobalds. The Queen herself showed touching consideration: once interrupting her speech to see the old man provided with a stool; on another occasion, at Nonsuch, holding a Council actually in his bedroom. And indeed, in spite of his increasing corporal infirmity, his brain was as active as ever: "my aching pains so increase that I am all night sleepless, though not idle in mind."

One effect of his ageing was to make him less tolerant of fools; especially of Essex and the Bacons, who by their silly intriguing with the King of France seemed to think they could force the prosecution of the war. As if he, Burghley, the contriver of a thousand "devices," could not easily out-practise any practising of theirs! Just now, the very presence of the Earl was an irritant. Impatiently, on the favourite's arrival at Court, "the old man upon some pet would needs

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away," muttering that, business being done, he would "go take physic."

"Froward old fool!" was Majesty's comment.

That was as it might be; but, all the same, Elizabeth without her "Spirit" was as a ship without a rudder. She could determine nothing. What, for instance, was to be done about Essex and his schemes for a spectacular enterprise against Spain? Dare she let him go? He would be sure to expose himself recklessly: perhaps he would be killed! In such a difficulty as this the Lord Treasurer was indispensable.

Now military glory had never been a subject that warmed Burghley's heart with enthusiasm, and for reasons of his own he was opposed to unnecessary provocation of Spain. At the same time he much preferred Essex at a distance to Essex at the ear of the Queen. Consequently, to the Earl's surprise, he gave his modified approval to an attempt upon Cadiz, merely limiting its objective to the destruction of such ships as were intended for an invasion of England. It was sufficiently manifest that Essex had been sent "on the pretext of his honourable appointment, which would leave him (Burghley) master of the Council"; but the careless Earl was too delighted at his command to scrutinize too nicely the Lord Treasurer's motives. Actually it was the opportunity that Burghley had been waiting for. While Essex was covering himself with the glory of his raid, the wily old Treasurer pressed the Queen once more for what he had been seeking by every expedient—flattery, intrigue, even the affected innuendo of a masque—for years: the Secretary's place for Robert. And the Queen at last, in the absence of her favourite, consented.

On his return, the victorious Earl was not long in sensing that his enemies had been busy. His mistress, so far from being admiring and gracious, showed herself carpingly and unreasonably peevish. It appeared he had grossly exceeded his instructions, cost her upwards of fifty thousand pounds and was offering in exchange—why, the whole takings of

the enterprise amounted to a bare thirteen thousand. That, at any rate, she would keep for herself. As for prize-money the sailors might whistle for it: already, no doubt, the rogues had kept back plenty for themselves. The Cecils shook their heads and pulled very long faces.

Yet, with exasperating suddenness, the Queen seemed to repent of her ungracious behaviour and had begun to wallow in the pleasures of a delicious reconciliation. These sudden revulsions of feeling in the Queen were growing too much for old Burghley, but he did what he could to keep up with them. Quickly trimming his sails to the fresh amorous gust, when the question of prisoners' ransoms was raised in the Council, he gauged it would be prudent to waive the government's claims in favour of the demands of the Earl. But the wicked old woman saw through him:

"Miscreant!" she bellowed: "Coward! Either for fear or favour you regard my Lord Essex more than myself."

What stung him most bitterly was the reflection that the reproach was justified. Reverting to his mood of pious resignation: "Her Majesty," he wrote to Essex, "chargeth and condemneth me for favouring you against her; your Lordship contrariwise misliketh me for pleasing of her Majesty to offend you." What, then, was he to do? Nothing, that he could see, but to obtain "licence to live as an anchorite, or some such private life, whereunto I am meetest for my age, my infirmity, and daily decaying estate. But yet," he concludes, with saintly independence, "I shall not be stopped by the displeasure of either of you both to keep my way to Heaven." (Perhaps, he could not help thinking, Archbishop Whitgift was right after all, and it was true that some were preordained to ultimate salvation. How else to account for that comforting sense of "election"?)

The simple young Earl was generously sympathetic; but Anthony Bacon was unable to conceal his jubilation. "The old Fox," he reported maliciously, "hath been made to crouch and whine!"

If so, it was for the last time. The raid on Cadiz, however

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unprofitable to the Treasury, had been successful enough—especially in view of Philip's preparations to assist the rebellion in Ireland—to justify a similar project next year. And when the command of it was again claimed by Essex, Lord Burghley once more saw fit to approve.

"I like so well," wrote the wily old man, "to attempt something against our Spanish enemy that I hope God will prosper the purpose."

The pious hope was destined to be unfulfilled. The fleet was driven back, almost immediately, by a storm; and while it remained weather-bound in the Channel, the Queen had time to change her mind. To the impatient Earl, the Lord Treasurer wrote a letter of fatherly condolence:

"In the time of this disaster, I did by common usage of my morning prayer on the 23rd of every month, in the 107th psalm read these nine verses proper for you to repeat, and especially six of them which I send to you. This letter savours more of divinity. As for humanity, I refer you to the joint letter from the Lord Admiral, myself and my son."

It would have needed, alas, more than a repetition of even the whole of the 107th psalm to reconcile Essex to the more human communication. With Raleigh, he immediately hastened to London to beg of the Queen that she would reconsider her decision; but the utmost she would permit was the sending of fire-ships into Ferrol; and even that mean task was to be entrusted to Raleigh—Essex was to have no part in it at all.

With this pitiful object the fleet set sail, in the middle of August, upon the ill-fated "Islands Voyage" of 1597. When the Queen at length had the full and lamentable particulars of the result, she flew into one of her paroxysms of rage. All along she had been opposed to risking such a fiasco, and this was the sequel to allowing herself to be overruled: more money thrown away for a national disgrace! In future, she warned Burghley, she would never let the fleet

out of the Channel. And Burghley, for his part, was content. Once more he had turned the absence of the Earl to advantage: Mr. Secretary Robert had been made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

To Essex this was the final humiliation. In despair he betook himself to his place at Wanstead, and there refused to be comforted. Was he ill, or merely pretending? No one could say. The Queen relented: even deigned to implore; but the pride of the Earl was now mortally offended.

"I hear to my sorrow," wrote the kindly old Treasurer, "that you have really been sick, but hope you will soon be back at court, where you will find a harvest of business, needful for many heads, wits and hands."

§ 7.

And so there was; but not of a sort that Essex was likely to relish. The fact was that peace at last seemed actually realizable. Henry of France had vindicated the national honour by routing the Spaniards at Amiens; at the same time, now that Henry was a Catholic, old Philip had no pretext for prolonging the quarrel. Consequently the French government, knowing Burghley's lukewarmness, confidently represented that unless further aid were forthcoming, both from England and the Provinces, the Spanish offers would have to be accepted. Burghley could only counter with the obligations due to the Provinces. Could England honourably abandon them? Could France?

While the negotiations were still pending, Essex suddenly recovered and made his appearance at Court. His arrival was followed by another touching reconciliation: the lovers were reunited. But was it to be peace or war? At the critical meeting of the Council, Burghley, with grave irony, turned for an expression of opinion to the reinstated Earl. Essex, with sulky naïveté, could only suggest that differences of religion were surely an insuperable obstacle to peace.

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However, in the end it was decided that England and the Provinces should each send embassies to France, and there attempt an agreement.

And England was to be represented by little Secretary Cecil.

Sir Robert's feelings were mixed. Undoubtedly it was an honour, and a great opportunity; but what about the Earl of Essex? With the Earl once more in favour with the Highest, his father constantly ailing and absent from Court, who was to keep an eye on the family interests? He remembered what he and his father had achieved when it had been the Earl who was out of the way. What if the Earl should now turn the tables?

In the end he decided to attempt an expedient which only the most disingenuous ever accomplish satisfactorily: that of honest frankness—a warm-hearted appeal to the Earl's generosity. The simple-minded Earl, glad of an opportunity of scorning the little Secretary, half contemptuously promised what he asked. But was that enough? Robert could not be sure. He remembered that Precept of his father's: "Trust no man!" Not even a friend. And if not a friend, then *a fortiori*. . . . No: on second thoughts it would be safer to make it an ordinary business deal. A deal in imported cochineal. He would not actually *call* it a deal; for the Earl, with his old-fashioned notions of honour, might resent it. But at any rate, a royal grant of the stuff—at (say) 50 per cent. discount: it ought to be worth anything up to £50,000 to him. That was far more satisfactory. Robert could then at least expect gratitude for benefits (very tangible) received: and the best of it was, it cost him personally nothing! It was certainly a transaction to gladden his old dying father.

For the great Lord Treasurer had not long to live. His instructions to his son, before the latter's departure for France, are the last of his vast series of momentous documents of state. Above all, he insisted, the United Provinces were to be secured from all further molestation. Peace,

indeed, was desirable above all things; but it must be an enduring peace: one that recognized realities and safeguarded the interests of the Protestant Religion.

It was in February, 1598, that young Cecil, with his embassy, had his meeting with the King of France at Angers. But his mission was impossible. The deputation from the Netherlands was intransigent: to abandon them he was forbidden by the terms of his instructions. Perseveringly he accompanied the Court to Nantes; but it was now quite evident that nothing was to be gained, and he was becoming seriously alarmed about the condition of his father:

"The bearer," ran a letter he received in March, "will report to you my great weakness. But do not take any conceit thereby to hinder your service. . . . God bless you on earth and me in Heaven, the place of my present pilgrimage."

Leaving the French King to make his peace with Philip if he would, Sir Robert returned with all haste to England. There were still some who thought "the old man's case is not so desperate but he may hold out another year well enough." And he did in fact rally. The news, when it arrived, of the peace concluded between France and Spain seemed to rekindle his vitality. Other things being equal, whenever France and Spain were friends, it had always been his policy to make overtures to Spain. And overtures he insisted on making. Essex, as was to be expected, was instantly up in arms. What of the Provinces? Were those gallant allies to be shamelessly abandoned? But Burghley retorted with Ireland. The rebellion was still raging: assisted by Spain it might prove disastrous. Whereas if Philip would agree to reasonable terms—and Burghley felt confident that he would—by ending the war in the Netherlands, they might also terminate the revolt in Ireland. For days the battle raged furiously in the Council: the Queen, as ever, fluctuating and inconstant, the Earl growing ever more violent. Burghley, at length, more grieved than angry, had recourse once more to the Psalms. Drawing from his

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pocket a Book of Common Prayer, he drew the Earl's attention to a verse of the 53rd: *The bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*

§ 8.

He, at any rate, had lived out his: the full three score and ten, and nearly eight over. During the past few months he had been rapidly declining: stirring abroad only in a coach or litter; rarely even visiting his beloved Theobalds, yet constantly appearing in his place at the Council. But now, it seemed, he was really dying, broken (it was thought) by his disappointment over the peace. "Much troubled in mind," he shut himself up in his house in the Strand and presently took to his bed. He chiefly complained of a pain in the breast, "which was thought to be a humour of the gout falling to that place." The Highest herself, realizing that the end was approaching, came graciously in person to visit him. On finding him too weak even to help himself to food, she actually stooped to feed him with her own princely hand—"as a careful norice," so the old man, greatly touched and reverent, reported afterwards to his son. Robert should express to her the gratitude and devotion he had been himself too moved to utter. "If I may be weaned to feed myself, I shall be the more ready to serve her on the earth, if not, I hope to be in Heaven a servitor for her and God's Church. And so," he concludes, dropping abruptly into prose, "I thank you for your partridges."

The mild pain he suffered was only spasmodic; and as he lay waiting, his mind still active, he had abundant leisure to survey his life in the leaving it. The full permanence of his achievement it was impossible for him to know, but there was much he could look back upon with grateful satisfaction. From obscure beginnings he had risen to the highest place in the realm, and held it for a period unprecedented in history. Happily born at the very first dawning of the Gospel light, he had striven all his life in

the cause of True Religion, gently propelling his unregenerate countrymen towards the Knowledge of their Salvation, shaping irrevocably the nation's happy destiny. And, in so doing, he had served, not only the nation, but the Prince, whose service, like the Almighty's—and because it was the Almighty's—had veritably been perfect freedom. "*Cor unum, via una*": it was thus he had lived up to his motto. As he had set at the head of those maxims of his: *Primum quaerite Regnum Caelorum*—First seek ye the Kingdom of Heaven—and (by inevitable consequence) all these things shall be added unto you: princely state, riches, palaces, three hundred manors up and down the country, the founding of a Noble House—yes, God had indeed been bountiful to His servant.

So he continued, musing: inwardly reviewing the whole course of that amazing lifetime. His brain, never at rest, must have been assailed towards the last by the oddest memories: of Dr. Parry, perhaps, and the Scottish Queen; of Edmund Campion—"England's pearl" as he had once described him—surely he had used him with all charity! Memories, also, now infinitely remote, of Lord Admiral Seymour (the lascivious ruffian) and of his brother the Protector, his own "Great Man to Friend. . . ."

On the evening of August 3 there was a perceptible change in his condition, with fits of shivering as of the ague. When these spasms passed, he began his solemn preparation for the end. Summoning his children, he bade them love and fear God and love one another; then, having prayed aloud for the Queen, he called his steward and delivered him his will. Someone standing by the bed urged him to remember his Saviour Christ, by Whose Blood he was to have forgiveness for his sins. It was done already, he said simply. His conscience did not trouble him: it never had. God had forgiven him his sins and would save his soul. After praying for a while with his chaplains, he took to repeating incessantly the Lord's Prayer in Latin. Memories of boyhood, perhaps: surely it was not possible (as someone

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anxiously conjectured) that he had all his life been secretly a Papist?

About midnight his speech began to falter, but as he lingered on restlessly he could be heard praying, in broken murmurs for death: "Come, Lord Jesus," he muttered repeatedly: "One drop of death, Lord Jesus: Oh what a heart is this, that will not let me die!"

The room seemed full of people—friends, servants: he knew not whom—praying, fussing about his bed. He had a sudden craving to be left alone:

"Ye torment me!" he exclaimed, angrily: "For God's sake let me die quietly."

It was now eight o'clock, and the Strand outside was already a-bustle as the dying old Councillor was faltering his last petitions.

"Lord receive my spirit," he was heard to whisper: "Lord have mercy on me. . . ."

So praying, he seemed to pass into a gentle sleep.

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